

# MAN IN INDIA

VOL. 46

NO. 3

JULY-SEPT. 1966

---

A Quarterly Anthropological Journal  
Founded in 1921 by Sarat Chandra Roy

---

## CONTENTS

	Page
Caste and Occupation in an Assamese Village ...	191
— <i>M. C. Goswami</i>	
<i>S. N. Ratha</i>	
<i>F. Nesha</i>	
Mirpur, a Christian Village ... ..	198
— <i>P. K. Bhowmick</i>	
The Goacarias of Goa ... ..	207
— <i>A. E. Punit</i>	
Settlement Patterns in Rajasthan ... ..	215
— <i>Amal Kumar Sen</i>	
Some Characteristics of the Widows in Rural Society ... ..	226
— <i>A. B. Bose</i>	
<i>M. L. A. Sen</i>	
Marriage among the Bhils ... ..	233
— <i>Ram Ahuja</i>	
Death-Rites among Maithil Brahmins ... ..	241
— <i>Makhan Jha</i>	
On the Palm-Prints of the Hajong ... ..	248
— <i>Bhuban M. Das</i>	
Mid-Digital Hair Among the Sa-ara and Kondh of Orissa ... ..	256
— <i>K. C. Tripathy</i>	
Man-chu-shih-li: An Essay on Polity and Religion in Inner Asia ... ..	261
— <i>Nirmal Chandra Sinha</i>	
Miscellaneous Notes ... ..	272
Book Reviews ... ..	277

*Edited by*

**Nirmal Kumar Bose**

# **MAN IN INDIA**

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**Works  
of  
Sarat Chandra Roy**

1. The Mundas and their Country
2. The Oraons of Chota Nagpur
3. Oraon Religion and Customs
4. The Kharias, 2 vols.
5. The Birhors
6. The Hill Bhuiyas

**N. C. Sarkar**  
*Manager, Man in India Office,*  
18 Church Road, Ranchi, S. E. Ry.  
Bihar, India.



# MAN IN INDIA

---

VOL. 46 } JULY-SEPT. 1966 { NO. 3

---

## CASTE AND OCCUPATION IN AN ASSAMESE VILLAGE

M. C. GOSWAMI

S. N. RATHA

F. NESHA

( Received on 24 February 1966 )

**Abstract.** The authors have described how occupations have tended to change in a village in Assam. They have tried to find out how far caste is operative in such change.

**S**UNDARBARI is a small village of 453 persons in the district of Kamrup, Assam. Adjacent to the Gauhati University campus and not far from the N. F. Railway headquarters, the village is situated on the newly laid Asian Highway at a distance of a few hundred metres from Jalukbari railway station. All the inhabitants of the village are Vaishnavite Hindus and speak Assamese, their mother tongue.

The settlement is not very old. In the year 1942, the inhabitants of the village of Sadilapur on the Brahmaputra were evacuated for reasons of defence, when a part of the

---

M. C. Goswami, Professor of Anthropology, Gauhati University.

S. N. Ratha, Lecturer in Anthropology, Gauhati University.

F. Nesha, Research Scholar in Anthropology, Gauhati University.

Their personal addresses are :

M. C. Goswami, 51, Gauhati University, Gauhati—14.

S. N. Ratha, 65, Gauhati University, Gauhati—14.

F. Nesha, Girls' Hall No. 3, Gauhati University, Gauhati—14.

population moved to the present site. Slowly and steadily they got over the initial difficulties and adjusted themselves to the new surroundings. After a decade and a half of its settlement here, the University of Gauhati moved to its present campus. The Assam Engineering College and the Assam Ayurvedic College too were established in its vicinity. Further, the N. F. Railway residential area was extended almost to the eastern fringe of the village.

The first settlers belonged to five castes—Brahmana, Kalitā, Kēot (Hāloi-Kēot), Koch and Kumār. Over the past quarter of a century there has been no change in the caste composition of the village. The population census taken during January 1966 is as follows :

TABLE 1

	<b>Brahmana</b>	<b>Koch</b>	<b>Kalita</b>	<b>Keot (Halo)</b>	<b>Kumar</b>
<b>Male</b>	1	13	59	53	119
<b>Female</b>	2	7	60	38	104

The Kumār, dominate the demographic scene, followed by the Kalitā, Kēot, Koch and the Brahmana. A discussion about this factor influencing the village organization is beyond the scope of this paper. This will be attempted separately.

As any other village community in India and particularly in Assam, Sundarbari was predominantly agricultural. Now its direct contact with the areas inhabited by sophisticated people—university teachers, students and railway officials—around and its loss of land as a result of evacuation from its old site have brought about certain changes which are more discernible in the occupational field.

The present working male population of the village is 103, distributed over five castes. This does not mean that the females are economic burdens on their male folk. Far from being so, they are economically helpful to the family. They are expert weavers and practically meet the entire demand of the family in respect of woven cloths. Except for Brahmana women, they catch fish in their leisure time. Over and above

such activities, the Kumār women prepare hand-made pottery and assist their partners in the preparation of wheel-made pottery. It is tabu for them to touch the potter's wheel.

There are 53 persons among the Kumār-POTTERS, 26 among the Kalitā, 19 among the Hāloi-Kēot, 4 among the Koch and only one among the Brahmana. Their occupations are distributed as follows :

TABLE 2

Caste	Agriculture	Service	Agriculture and pottery	Miscellaneous	Total
Brahmana	×	1	×	×	1
Koch	1	3	×	×	4
Hāloi (Kēot)	2	15	×	1 labourer 1 confectioner	19
Kalita	3	18	×	3 labourers 2 tailors	26
Kumar	9	14	27	1 labourer 2 shopkeepers	53
Total	15	51	27	10	103

Of the total, 103 persons are from the age-group of 20-50 years and the rest are from the age-group of 51-80 years. For the purpose of our discussion and comparison the persons in the group of 20-50 years are placed in generation I, the persons in the age-group 51-80 years and their age-mates who are dead but whose families are represented in generation I are placed in generation II. Those beyond 80 years (none alive) who are represented through their sons and grandsons in generation II and I are placed in generation III.

Thus the Brahmana family has only one working member in generation I and only one each in generations II and III. The Kalitā have 20 working members in generation I, 12 in generation II (only 6 alive) and 10 in generation III (all dead). The Hāloi-Kēot have 17 in generation I, 11 in generation II (only 2 alive) and 9 in generation III (all dead). The Koch do not have any working member in generation I, 4 in

generation II and 1 in generation III (dead). Finally the Kumâr have 40 working males in generation I, 25 in generation II (13 alive) and 16 in generation III (all dead).

The nature of change in occupation is presented in the following tables :

TABLE 3

*Brahmana*

	Generation I (20-50 years)		Generation II (51-80 years)		Generation III (above 80)	
Working males	1	%	1	%	1	%
Agriculture	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%
Service	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	1	100	1	100	1	100

TABLE 4

*Koch*

	Generation I (20-50 years)		Generation II (51-80 years)		Generation III (above 80)	
Working males	0	%	4	%	1	%
Agriculture	0	0%	1	25%	1	100%
Service	0	0%	3	75%	0	0%
Total	0	0	4	100	1	100

TABLE 5

*Kalita*

	Generation I (20-50 years)		Generation II (51-80 years)		Generation III (above 80)	
Agriculture	0	%	5	41.7%	9	90%
Service	16	80%	6	50%	1	10%
Misc. (Labourer)	3	15%	0	0%	0	0%
Tailoring	1	5%	1	8.3%	0	0%
Total	20	100	12	100	10	100

TABLE 6  
*Haloï (Keot)*

	Generation I (20-50 years)		Generation II (51-80 years)		Generation III (above 80)	
Agriculture	2	11.7%	5	45.5%	7	77.8%
Service	18	76.5%	4	36.5%	1*	11.1%
Miscellaneous (Blacksmith)	0	0%	1	9.0%	1	11.1%
Confectioner	1	5.9%	1	9.0%	0	0%
Labourer	1	5.9%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	17	100	11	100	9	100

TABLE 7

*Kumar*

	Generation I (20-50 years)		Generation II (51-80 years)		Generation III (above 80)	
Agriculture and Pottery	15	37.57%	24	96%	16	100%
Service	13	32.5%	1	4%	0	0%
Only agriculture	9	22.5%	0	0%	0	0%
Miscellaneous (Shopkeeping)	2	5.0%	0	0%	0	0%
Labourer	1	2.5%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	40	100	25	100	16	100

The Brahmana and Koch are not well represented in the village. Though they are integrated into the village organization, their limited population does not significantly reflect their caste structure and occupational variation.

Among the Kalitā 10, working males represent generation III which increases to 12 in generation II and to 20 in generation I. Along with the rise in the working population the diversity of occupation increases. The percentage of cultivators shows a steep fall from 90% in generation III to 41.7% in generation II and then to 0% in generation I. On the other

hand bureaucratic professions register a steep rise from 1% to 50% and then to 80% from generation III to generation I. There is also a slow increase in the population from 0% to 8.3% then to 20% professing miscellaneous occupations.

On examining the position of the Hāloi-Kəot we get more or less the same picture. Though agriculture engages some people in generation I, its fall from 77.8% in generation III to 45.5% in generation II and then to 11.7% in generation I compares well with the Kalitā position. Compared to agriculture the position of bureaucratic professions is just the inverse—a rise from 11.1% through 36.5% to 76.5%. There is not much change in the percentage of population depending on miscellaneous jobs.

The Kumār present a slightly different picture. This is a caste with a hereditary caste-craft, pot-making. In addition to pot-making they are farmers on their own land and/or share-croppers on others' land. Families which give up pottery-making do it under compelling circumstances. As referred to above, the male and the female are complementary to each other in the pot-making process. In the absence of a competent male or a female in the family, pots cannot obviously be made. In generation I there are a few women who do not know how to make pottery. These are the reasons why the percentage of potters-cum-cultivators has fallen from 100% to 96% in the generation II. The steep fall of 96% to 37.5% in generation III is due to the fact that the young females are not sufficiently skilled in their traditional technique. Agriculture as a whole does not show a drastic fall in this caste. From 100% through 96% to 60% (37.5% + 22.5%) seems to be a slow and gradual process, though the fall from 96% in generation II to 60% in generation III, compares well with the Kalitā and Hāloi-Kəot picture. There is also an emergence of miscellaneous workers in generation III.

Looking back on the entire picture in its totality one finds that weaning away from agriculture among the Kalitā and Hāloi is much quicker than among the Kumār from generation III to generation II. The reason for this is that the Kalitā

and the Hāloi-Kēot do not have the tradition of share-cropping. So, whatever personal land they possess gets fragmented as the members increase and separate. As a result, a family finds it difficult to depend wholly on land. The Kumār by and large share-crop someone's land in addition to their own. Besides, they make pots. So there does not arise any sudden necessity to give up cultivation. With a little of cultivation and some amount of pottery-making a small family can still maintain itself.

The decline in the number of cultivators from generation II to generation I among the Kalitā, Hāloi-Kēot and Kumār respectively is 41.7%, 33.8% and 58.4%. There is also a concomitant rise in the number of service-holders among these castes in the same order by 30%, 40% and 28.5%. The reasons are quite obvious. They shifted to this present site when some of the members of generation I were in their youth and still others were teen-agers. At this stage their loss of agricultural land compelled them to look for jobs. To this was added an incentive by their close contact with the Railway and University establishments as the source of employment opportunities. So those who did not have adequate qualification to fit into white-collar jobs joined the above organizations as office peons or as unskilled employees.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors are grateful to the hospitable villagers, particularly to Prof. Durgeswar Das, Harinath Hāloi and Sri Sarbananda Das for their kind co-operation and active assistance.

# MIRPUR

## A CHRISTIAN VILLAGE

P. K. BHOWMICK

( Received on 11 November 1965 )

**Abstract.** The writer has described a Christian ( converted caste Hindu ) village in the district of Midnapur, West Bengal. A local zemindar once employed a few Portuguese gunners to fight against Maratha invaders some time in 1770 A.D. A few local people, due to their professional contact with these Firinghees, ultimately embraced Christianity. Yet a good number of Hindu rituals still survive in their life cycle, like the formal application of turmeric paste before marriage, application of vermillion marks on the forehead of the women, etc.

Due to governmental patronage in the past, these Christians got better opportunities of employment and led a rather segregated life. They had very little connexion with the people of the locality. This shows, how religion segments society vertically in certain cases.

### *Introduction*

THE village of Mirpur is situated in Midnapur district near the river Rupnarayan and the confluence of the river Hooghly with the sea. It is said that a Brahman trader named Janardan Upadhyaya came here from Uttar Pradesh in the middle of the 16th century A.D., and started business in Geonkhali, which is a mile away from Mirpur. He became the zemindar of Mahisadal near Mirpur, and got a *sanad* from the Mughal emperor and ruled over this area.

In 1738, he was succeeded by his son Anandalal Upadhyaya. After his death, his wife succeeded in 1770, when the region was threatened by Maratha raiders. The zemindars of Mahisadal maintained many trained soldiers in order to protect the people from the raids of the Marathas.

---

Dr. P. K. Bhowmick is Lecturer in Social Anthropology in the University of Calcutta. His personal address is 727, Lake Town, Calcutta—28.



The river coast was, however, constantly raided by pirates from Arakan and Chittagong, known as the Magh. The zemindar then brought twelve Portuguese gunners, and this particular village of Mirpur was given to them free of rent for settlement. Out of these 12 settlers, 10 surnames are available from the old register of the Church. These are Sute, Pereira, Tessera, Rozario, D'Cruz, Nunis (Noones), Lobo, Rota, Pallon and and Farnando. It is said that the original Portuguese settlers had local Hindu concubines. The Bishop of Calcutta tried to bring them under his fold. A Bengali preacher was sent to baptize the women living with the Portuguese gunners. He also made arrangements for their marriage according to Christian rites.

Up to the present day, Mirpur is segregated, and the Christians or Firinghees alone live there. Huts are arranged haphazard in the village. Almost all the huts are built of earth, rectangular in shape, and thatched with straw. Only two houses have country-made tiles and corrugated iron sheets for roofing. Most of the residents live by agriculture and gardening. Many of these villagers also work outside, specially in Calcutta, in various jobs. They spend their week-ends at home and thus keep up regular relationship with their families.

### *The Communities*

There are two churches in the village with earthen walls and roofs of corrugated iron sheets. Table 1 gives the details of Protestants and Catholics in the village.

TABLE 1

*Details of population, surname-wise with respective religious faiths*

Sl. No.	Surnames	No. of families	Total no. of individuals	Protestants		Catholics	
				Family	Individuals	Family	Individuals
1	Pereira	2	16	2	16	—	—
2	Tessera	12	75	4	26	8	49
3	Rozario	7	37	3	15	4	23

Sl. No.	Surnames	No. of families	Total no. of individuals	Protestants		Catholics	
				Family	Individuals	Family	Individuals
4	D'Cruz	3	16	1	3	2	13
5	Nunis (Noonees)	3	16	—	—	3	16
6	Lobo	5	28	3	18	2	10
7	Rota	6	36	—	—	6	36
Immigrant and converted families who came later.							
8	Isaac	1	5	1	5	—	—
9	Ghorai	1	6	—	—	1	6
10	Biswas	2	6	1	4	1	2
11	Mallik	1	3	—	—	1	3
12	Mitra	1	6	—	—	1	6
13	Sengupta	1	5	—	—	1	5
Total		45	255	15	87	30	168

In respect of names of the individuals in this community, there is some peculiarity. The present generation is in favour of using local Bengali names. Arthur Isaac is now 62 years old, but his son and daughters are named Dinabandhu (17), Eva (14) and Juthika (10), respectively. In case of Michael Lobo's (34) family, his sons have names like Suprakash (10), Suprabhat (6) and Suresh (2). In the same way, John Pereira (40) has a son and a daughter named Atin (14) and Shyamali (8). This particular trend in giving names common among Bengali Hindus is very significant.

### *Voluntary organizations*

It is said that the ancestors of these families acquired wealth and landed property as gifts from the zemindar of Mahisadal. But due to extravagant living, they were on the verge of ruin. Recently, a few young men are trying their best to bring about social reform. For this, the young people who stay outside and earn by service or profession have organized a voluntary organization, named, *Khristiya Madak Nibarani Samiti*, or Christian Association for the Prevention

of Drinking. They have also organized a Poor Fund in order to help the needy and distressed of this community. For this purpose, they raise funds from the service-holders staying outside, as well as from all the villagers, in the form of gifts of rice or paddy.

There are two primary schools in the village. One has been organized by the Government of West Bengal through the District School Board, Midnapur, and the other is run by the Catholic Christian Mission. The authorities of the Christian Mission contribute liberally for the development of this institution.

There is a club named Udayan, or Sunrise Club, organized by the younger generation. There are about 40 members. It has a library with about 300 books on various topics, specially, drama, detective novels and fiction. Generally, service-holders contribute or donate regularly for its development. This club sometimes organizes entertainment programmes like amateur theatrical performance, sports and picnic. The Christian Mission helps these boys financially for distribution of prizes to children participating in sports. Many outsiders also join such gatherings. The Christian Mission generally organizes plays, like Sign of the Cross and other dramas of a religious nature. Some other dramas have also been staged by the members of this club.

The women of this village have organized in 1948 an association of their own. It is called *Maria Sangh* or Sodality Party. The members raise funds and visit the houses of the sick and distressed people of the village and give assistance to them. Sometimes they organize prayers in their homes for recovery. This organization holds monthly meetings and a clergyman from a nearby place attends these. They also hold moral classes for children.

The children belonging to the age-group, 8 to 12 years, have also another association, whose members do not have to pay any subscription. The name of this association is *Rakshak Dut* / Boys Organization. Mrs. Rozario, the Mistress of the Missionary School, is now its chief organizer.

Members generally assemble on Fridays and Sundays and attend the prayer meetings. Arrangements for sports and games are made for them on such occasions. The village has also a Home Guard Party affiliated to the local Police Station. The main activity of this party is to guard the village against dacoits.

### *Occupations*

The Firinghees, i.e. the converted Christians, as termed by the neighbouring villagers, profess only a limited number of occupations. Almost all the families have only homestead land in which their domiciles live. Only a few persons have a few acres of cultivable land, up to the limit of 5 acres. There are a few big-sized families, each having 7 to 10 members. This is due to the fact that grown-up sons, along with their fathers, work in factories and dockyards. The occupations are listed below.

TABLE 2

#### *Occupation*

	<b>Total population</b>	<b>Total working men</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Culti- vation</b>	<b>Day- labourer</b>	<b>School teacher</b>
Persons	205	58	34	15	8	1
Families	45	45	23	13	8	1

It has been noticed that 58 working men are distributed in 45 families and out of 58 working men, 34 persons work outside the village. They belong to 23 families. 15 persons are engaged in agriculture. They belong to 13 families. Eight persons are day-labourers, and 1 is a school teacher. The service-holders have very little connexion in respect of economic activities inside the village or its neighbourhood. As they earn cash, they can make their purchases in Calcutta or elsewhere. The cultivators of this community do not grudge working in neighbouring villages, irrespective of caste and creed. They also employ others, mainly from the Mohammedan community, on rare occasions. In fact, however, it has been noticed that they live in complete segregation

with very little connexion with the neighbouring villagers. Eight day-labourers have no cultivable land of their own. As Geonkhali is a good market place and a ferry service station, these persons easily get work as porters. Thus they do not depend on others for their maintenance and are also not connected in any way with the agrarian setting of the village or locality. Due to professing Christianity, it was easy for those who knew a little English, to get better jobs in towns. Hence, they do not find it necessary to establish any sort of economic dependence upon other communities in the village.

The Christians get all sorts of social services from the market, like services of washerman, etc. In respect of medical aid, the Catholic Mission helps them in many ways, and the villagers receive modern medical services and advantages from this source.

### *Ceremonies*

Marriage, birth and death observances are regulated according to Christian customs. There are two churches in this village in charge of Deacons. Due to scarcity of getting suitable brides from the neighbourhood, marriages are arranged within the village, when close blood relations only are avoided. The negotiations are made by elders and a formal ceremony is observed, which is known as *Pantola*, when everything in connexion with the marriage is settled. After this, on three consecutive Sundays, the Deacon declares the names of the bride and the bridegroom for proper intimation to the villagers. If there is no objection, then the final date is fixed. Sometimes dowries, in the form of presents to the bridegroom, as prevalent in Hindu society, are offered to him by the bride's party, but no bride-price is paid.

Before final betrothal, female members belonging to the bridegroom's family visit the bride, and after final selection, married and elderly women of the party apply vermilion on the forehead and hair-parting of the bride. Ceremonial presents in the form of cloth or garment etc. are sent by the bridegroom's family to the bride's house. Marriage takes

place generally in the bride's village. Ceremonial application of turmeric paste is made on the body of the bride and the bridegroom on three consecutive days prior to marriage. Then a new piece of cloth, dyed yellow, is given to each of them. The application of turmeric paste is followed by a ceremonial bath on each occasion before evening.

On the wedding day, both the bride and bridegroom observe fast, and during the early part of the day the bride puts on her best dress, when again vermilion marks are put on her forehead and hair-parting. Then she is brought in a palanquin to the church for marriage where all the villagers assemble as witnesses. The bridegroom is also brought in a palanquin to the church. The bride stands on the left of the groom and then the wedding prayer is held.

After that the bride and the groom are carried in the same palanquin and received by the bride's mother, who offers, on their arrival, milk and cream to the couple. After the reception, both are also offered various kinds of sweets. On the same day, a wedding feast is given to the villagers. Then the couple go to the bridegroom's house on the same day. They remain there for three days, when again, a feast is given to the villagers. They then return to the bride's house. They stay there for a couple of days and then return to the house of the bridegroom.

If a marriage takes place between a Catholic and a Protestant, either the bride or the bridegroom has to change her or his faith.

There is no special ceremony in connexion with birth. After the birth of a son or daughter, seven days are observed as 'unclean' days. The Deacon in charge of the church ceremonially scatters water on the baby and its mother at the end of this period. Sometimes the BARBER and the WASHERMAN attend the ceremony for purification. Again, within 6 or 7 months after the birth, a ceremonial name is given to the baby by the clergyman in the church.

The dead are buried according to Christian custom ; and

7 days are observed as the period of mourning. No burial takes place during the night. On the 8th day, as I was told by the Deacon of the church, a mourning prayer is held.

### *Leadership*

To decide on the socio-political affairs affecting the community and guidance in their social matters, there is a communal headman, who is elected by the villagers on the basis of personal qualities and attributes. He discusses each problem with other elders of the village and acts on their joint decision. Petty thefts, drunkenness, etc. are seriously dealt with by the village council. For this, they have one big bell in the church, which is rung repeatedly by one of the villagers, and on hearing this, every male member assembles there. Of course, such intimation can also be given to any member of the village council, who communicates this to all the villagers. The present headman of this informal village council is Mr. H. Pereira. Some of the villagers were members of the now defunct Union Board, from which, old, infirm and invalid persons used to get relief on the recommendation of the members of the Board. Now two persons of this village have been elected as members the Gram Sabha.

### *Religious organization*

It is said that all the Christians of this village previously belonged to the Protestant faith. But one Mr. Rotha first became a Catholic, and now Catholics outnumber Protestants. The two churches are regularly visited by senior clergymen from time to time. The Deacons have to keep close contact with the respective Bishops in Calcutta.

Missionary organizations have come forward and taken all-out initiative for the betterment of converted or locally born Christians, by giving them regular relief, help, employment and service. As a result, many members of the present generation are found to be employed in many factories, dockyards and the Navy. As they earn more than the

members of the neighbouring communities, they have naturally a superiority complex, and do not mix with them during their short stay on week-ends and holidays, for which they hardly find any necessity or time. So the old tradition of seclusion or avoidance runs on as formerly.

Though participation in the Gram Sabha or Village Council has been noted as an important feature of their social life now, yet they have hardly come forward to overcome or forsake their religious barriers and prejudices, and are still leading almost a segregated and secluded life in the village, due to the historical causes mentioned earlier.



# THE GOACARIAS OF GOA

A. E. PUNIT

( Received on 9 October 1965 )

**Abstract.** This paper presents some historical evidence of the organization of villages in Goa from the 15th century A.D. to the period when Goa came under Portuguese rule.

THE earliest known history of the social system of the Goa villages is described in a register known as *Foral dos Usos e Costumes*, dated 16th September, 1526. There were well-organized village communities with separate dwellings, each of which was jealously guarded. Every village had well-defined boundaries. It had also its own artisans and village servants. Though these communities were originally communities of kinsmen, yet the kinship tradition became weak by the absorption of strangers from outside. Much village land remained common property and was managed by a body of men known as the Goacares. Each village had its own Goacares who represented the common ancestors of all the free kinsmen of the village. According to the *Foral*, the term Goacare refers to a governing or managing headman. But this does not seem to be the correct meaning of the term. In the Deccan or in the West Coast, the term was used in a special sense, meaning the holder of *mirasi* land<sup>1</sup> as well as the village headman.<sup>2</sup> Thus the term was used to connote 'People of the village' *par excellence*.<sup>3</sup> When, at a later stage, the village communities of this region came successively under the rule of the Kadambas, the Muslims and the Portuguese, these two functions, namely, the governing and management of village affairs became the primary duties of the village Goacare.

The council of the Goacares was known as Goacaria.<sup>4</sup> The Goacaria was a representative body and not a body with

---

The author is U. G. C. Jr. Research Fellow in the Department of Sociology, Karnatak University, Dharwar (Mysore State).

an inherent authority. There was no written law and no record. The entire structure was based on oral tradition which was passed down from generation to generation. The Goacares themselves did not make new rules, but merely declared what had always been.<sup>5</sup> They did not even have any political sanction to back their decisions. For as far as can be ascertained from the records, the Goacarias did not pay taxes or revenue to any ruling authority in recognition of its sovereignty over them until 1054 A.D.<sup>6</sup>

The position of the members of the Goacaria was hereditary. In case a Goacare left the village, or became a Muslim, or was incapable of holding office because of physical or mental incapacity, the Goacaria was called and a proclamation was made to the effect that his property rights along with his Goacare-ship should go to the next heir in line. It was absolutely necessary to choose the successor from the family of the previous Goacare.<sup>7</sup> In case there was none to succeed him in his family, the property and office was auctioned in the Goacaria and given to the highest bidder.

### *Goacares and land-ownership*

The Goacares had the sole ownership of the cultivable land of the village. Even those plains within the limits of the village which were wild and unreclaimed were under their control. The Goacares could give the vacant, waste and uncultivated land for cultivation to village servants like Temple Brahman, the Gatekeeper, the WASHERMAN, the COBBLER, the CARPENTER, the BLACKSMITH, the Temple SWEEPER, dancing girls, etc. These persons enjoyed rent-free land for their services. The grants were irrevocable. No servant could be removed and another put in his place. The grant passed down from father to son and grandson and so on. In case a hereditary servant left the village or had no heir to succeed him, another man of the same profession was put in his place. However, no Goacare could make rent-free grant to any person who was not a resident of the village. The Goacare could however grant waste or fallow land within his village to any applicant who agreed to bring the waste

under cultivation. The cultivator of such a land was required to pay rent at a concessional rate for 25 years. After that he had to pay the full customary rate. If a Goacare desired to sell any heritable property in the village, he had to obtain the consent of all the Goacares, and no one could also purchase without similar permission. Any bargain regarding the sale of property made without such permission was void and could be set aside by other Goacares if they so desired. Those lands which were not privately owned were put up for auction every year and knocked down to the highest bidder. This was practised in order to assure that a particular plot of land did not belong to the cultivator for good.<sup>8</sup> The bidders in the auction were the residents of the village. However, cases when land was given to an outsider who bid the highest are not completely absent.

### *Goacares and social privileges*

The Goacares also enjoyed some social privileges. None of them could be removed from office, no matter what fault he committed. On all important occasions like feasts and festivals the Goacares were honoured by an offering of betels and *pachauris* (handkerchiefs or scarfs). On such occasions, the chief Goacare of the village of Neura-katan enjoyed a special privilege. Some villages like Neura-katan, Taleigon and a few others<sup>9</sup> were considered to be the original settlements of those pioneers who founded the village communities in this region. Therefore the Goacares of these villages in general, and the Goacare of Neura-katan in particular, enjoyed certain privileges and were held in high esteem. The first offering of betel and scarf was made to him, and afterwards to other Goacares in accordance with their rank and seniority. This order of precedence was strictly observed even at the time of calling a meeting of the Goacaria.

When a formal resolution regarding some village matter was arrived at by all the members, the decision was written down. A formal declaration of the decision was made by the chief Goachare of the village of Neura-katan. This formal declaration was known as *nemo*. During seed time,

the first field prepared for sowing and the first field to be reaped during harvest was that of the Goacare. Only after the field of the Goacare had been attended to, others could attend to their own fields. The same order of precedence was followed during the annual thatching of roofs with palm leaves. The roof of the house of the Goacare was thatched first and after that the roofs of the other houses in the village. When dancing men and women visited the village, they had to perform first at the house of the Goacare and could then proceed to other houses. In case Goacares of equal rank were to receive betel and other honours, they had to do so standing side by side with their arms crossed, so that the right hand of one might be below the left hand of the other.\* This crossing of hands neutralized the difference and prevented disputes. In those cases where the Goacares were of equal rank and belonged to the same family, so that it was difficult to decide the pre-eminence of one or the other, the Goacares could sell the honour of precedence for the occasion to any one among them at an agreed price. The amount collected was distributed in the village. If no one came forward to purchase the honour, the Kulkarni<sup>10</sup> locally known as *Escrivao* received it on their behalf.

We notice that in most writings about these communities, the village writer or Kulkarni is alluded to as one of the village superiors. Some writers mention that the Kulkarni was originally appointed by the Goacare. The office of the Kulkarni was also hereditary. Once appointed, the Kulkarni could not be removed from office. On the death of the Kulkarni the successor had to be chosen from the same family. But it appears from a close scrutiny of historical records that the Kulkarni was a later addition to the roll of village officials. Until 1054, the village communities in this region were sovereign autonomous bodies which did not recognize ownership to land superior to the village itself. In the early 11th century, there was an infiltration of Muslims into this area by way of the sea. In order to fend off this infiltration, the village communities sought the help of the Kadamba rulers and agreed to pay them *coxi-vorodo* which was a tax

given by free will.<sup>11</sup> It was probably at this time that Goa became divided into *mahals* and Kulkarnis were appointed for maintaining land records and for collection of revenue. These Kulkarnis, who were usually Brahmans, enjoyed considerable esteem in the village both because of their superior status and also because of the authority vested in them by the rulers.

### *Decay of Goacaria system*

The destructive wars between the Kadamba rulers and the Muslim infiltrators continued for a long time. The Goacares were increasingly called upon to bear the burdens of the war. They ran into debt and in order to meet their liabilities issued shares in Goacaria property in exchange of loans and other help given to them by the new settlers who were locally known as *Ferveiros* and by those who had taken land on lease. This enhanced the status of the *Ferveiros* and entitled them to a share in the income of the Goacaria property. The sternness of the Goacaria in maintaining the central principal under which the rights of the Goacaria were attainable on no other terms except connexion in blood, weakened to a great extent. The principle of local contiguity, i.e. inhabitation of a common land which proved to be endowed with far-reaching repercussions came to be recognized as a condition of eligibility in political and social functions. Once these new ideas came to the fore, they progressively brought about an end of the previous ideas of Goacaria rights with an exclusive membership.

This process of degeneration was aggravated by the incessant wars between the Muslims and the Kadamba rulers. In the end Goa became subject to the Muslim ruler Mallik Hussein who started with the Islamic theory that the property of an 'infidel' became the property of the faithful conqueror. Accordingly, he proclaimed himself the virtual owner of all the land of the territory and appointed, wherever necessary, agents to look after the revenue collection. An attempt was made to deprive the Goacares of some of their traditional

privileges. During these disturbed times, the Ferveiros also agitated for increasing power. This state of affairs, however, lasted only for 40 years when Muslim rule came to an end.<sup>12</sup>

By far the most radical changes in the entire organization were precipitated by the advent of the Portuguese in Goa. The Portuguese, on establishing themselves in Goa in 1510 A.D., initially recognized the autonomy of the Goacarias. In fact, they did so in order to enlist the sympathy of the local population. The system of Goacaria or Comunidade, the new name by which they came to be known, was preserved and taxes payable by them were reduced by a  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd. At the same time, in order to consolidate their power, the Portuguese also set up their own administrative and judicial machinery and framed new Acts. But the latter did not fulfil the original promise held out by them that the constitution of the Comunidade would be respected and preserved. On the other hand, it affirmed the right of the ruling authority to intervene in the affairs of the Comunidade and regulate their relation with the public, as and when expedient. It did not incorporate, in fact, accurately the usages and customs followed by the Comunidades and also did not hold out any assurance that such usages and customs would be preserved. Moreover, the seemingly innocuous measure of investing the local representatives of the Governor with authority to exercise their power arbitrarily proved in the end to be the death-knell of the Goacaria or Comunidade system. These local representatives aided and abetted by the State authorities were apt to arrogate to themselves the powers of the virtual rulers of the communities under their supervision and hinder their smooth functioning. Anarchy was, therefore, a natural consequence; temples were destroyed and lands confiscated. To make matters worse, it was declared that the King of Portugal was the direct owner of all the land and that the Goacares were simply renters. *Cox-vorodo*, originally a voluntary contribution, was made a compulsory tribute to be paid to the Government. In the year 1735, an Act was passed which *inter alia* provided that

the new settlers could be permitted to bid for lease of the paddy fields. This increased the number of outsiders in the Comunidade. There were frequent disputes between the newcomers and the Goacares. Litigations increased, giving rise to social tension. In short, the cumulative result of this policy was that the village lands were neglected and misery stalked the land. Oppressed and unhappy, the peasants left their homes and moved away to other places. As a result, the Goacaria system which was the very hub of the entire village organization became thoroughly disintegrated.

#### REFERENCES

1. *Baden-Powell, B.H.* : *The Indian Village Community*. HRAF Press, New Haven 1957, pp. 362-365. Author traces the origin of the term *mirasi* to the word Kaniadsai, which in Tamil means inheritance and which the Mohammedan officials rendered into Persian as *mirasi*. It emphasized the hereditary claim of general village tenure as distinguished from ordinary kind of superior status as regards a particular plot or holding.
2. *do.* : 'The Village of Goa in the Early 16th Century'. *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1900, vol. 32, p. 277.
3. It is interesting to note that a term almost similar in meaning to Goacare was in vogue in Karnataka (the land of the Kanarese kings), *Urar* was the term which was applied to a local body with similar functions as that of Goacaria. The term *Urar* in Kannada, means the people of the village or town. It is derived from the word *Ur* which means an inhabited place, a village or a town.
4. *Report of the Goa Land Reform Commission* : Government of Goa, Daman and Diu. February 1964, pp. 22-23, also see *Foral dos Usos e Costumes*, p. 370.
5. *Maine, Sir Henry* : *Village Communities in the East and West*, chapter III also refer to Dr. R. Mukerjee's *Democracies of the East*, 1923, p. 157.
6. *Report of the Goa Land Reform Commission* : Government of Goa, Daman and Diu. February 1964, pp. 22-23 also *Foral dos Usos e Costumes*, p. 370.

7. *Baden-Powell, B.H.* : 'Deccan Villages'. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* : 1897, vol. 29, p.251. The author quotes Sir. J. Malcolm who writes that it was absolutely necessary in restoring a deserted village to find some descendant of the old headman's family to take up the headmanship ; and how in cases where a new man had to be appointed, it was with the understanding that he should resign if ever an even remote descendant of the real family should reappear.
8. *Foral dos Usos e Costumes* : Dom Jao, p. 373.
9. *Ibid* (list cited).
10. *Baden-Powell, B.H.* : 'The Village of Goa in the Early 16th Century'. *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1900, vol.32. p.266. Also refer to Fonseca Nicolau Jose : *A Historical and Archaeological Sketch of the City of Goa*, Bombay, 1878, pp. 21-22.
11. *Report of the Goa Land Reform Commission*, Government of Goa, Daman and Diu, February 1964, p. 23.
12. *Ibid.* p. 24.



# SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN RAJASTHAN

AMAL KUMAR SEN

( *Received on 20 December 1965* )

**Abstract.** The findings of this study of settlements in Rajasthan are as follows :

Both scattered and compact patterns prevail in Rajasthan. They are controlled initially by the relief and water-table. Accordingly, six settlement pattern belts have been distinguished.

In the desert region, the scattered pattern dominates in the dune country as well along the foothills and buried ridges. In both cases, the family forms the core of the settlement and the village as a unit is less significant. The influence of caste is also important, but is stronger in the case of rocky desert than in the sandy desert. Deserted and temporary villages are common in the dune country.

In the inter-dune areas and desert piedmont, settlements are compact. The sites are controlled by relief. But protection given by the Jagirdars often led to development of settlements in adverse locations in the piedmont areas. Settlements are mostly permanent, although a tendency of shifting their sites is common. Caste, kinship and lineage are important factors which have led to the development of compact form.

There is a tendency in the rocky desert to shift the site of the settlements along the sides of the roads or railway lines. Settlements are mostly unplanned in the desert.

Along the Aravallis, settlements are mostly located on the top of hillocks or along the valleys. The settlements are mostly scattered on account of inaccessibility, meagre resources, absence of extensive plain and social tradition of living in isolation.

---

The author is the Officer-in-charge of the Cartography Section of the Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Government of India, Jodhpur.

In the E. Rajasthan plain, both scattered and compact forms of settlement exist. With the diversification of economy where the population increased rapidly, the entire structure of the settlement has changed.

The rural house-types have their distinctive characteristics in all the units and are the reflections of man's adaptation to local environment.

### *Introduction and object*

ACCORDING to the 1961 Census (Government of Rajasthan 1961) there are 34,528 villages in Rajasthan, of which 2,288 are uninhabited ; 84 are urban centres having a population of more than 10,000 population. Villages which form the nucleus of the rural settlement show contrasts in form and pattern, and the effective distances between the villages vary according to their geographic locations, being longest in the western part which forms a part of the Indian Desert. The paper aims at analysing the forms and patterns of rural settlement of the State in relation to the anthropo-geographic controls.

### *Method of study*

The Survey of India quarter-inch sheets and aerial photographs of certain areas were used as the basis for the study. Reconnaissance field traverses were also conducted in selected areas, particularly in Jaisalmer, Barmer, Pali, Jalor and Jodhpur districts. Existing literature and information were also consulted. The location of the settlements depicting these forms in relation to the distribution and arrangements of the houses which form the units of the settlements in Rajasthan, were plotted on the 1:1 million map of the State. The scattered, compact and urban settlements were shown by symbolic representation. The extents of the scattered and compact settlements were then correlated with the enviromental aspects and human adaptation and six belts with distinctive settlement patterns were finally cartographed. Relief was found to be the most significant factor in deter-

mining the location of form and type of settlement. The belts were designed on the balanced distribution of environmental and human responses to the habitat conditions.

### Observations

On the basis of aridity index, the whole of Rajasthan lying west of the 50 cm. isohyte line is a part of the Great Indian Desert (Sen 1954). Contrasts in settlement pattern between this desert and semi-arid and other tracts lying towards the east of the 50 cm. line are sharply noticed. The contrasts along with the geographic controls were worked out as follows.

#### Settlement patterns of the desert region

**Scattered dune settlement :** These are found mostly in pockets throughout the Rajasthan desert and extend towards the east as far as the foothills of the Aravalli Range. Dunes are the most significant land-marks and the belts are severely dune-fied with 20 to 80 per cent and even more of the total area affected by them (Raheja and Sen 1964). Here the villages and houses are mostly scattered. The family builds a *jhupa* in one of its fields, so that the families live scattered. The location of the settlement is controlled primarily by relief. The leeward side of the dune which is protected from the winds is generally selected. The base of the dune is generally selected because the water-table is in general closer to the surface here. Settlement sites are selected only where construction of *tanka* or a well is possible. Thirdly, the stabilized dunes are mostly selected as the cultivation of *bajra* or bulrush millet to some extent is possible here (Raheja and Sen 1964). Such lands being limited and narrow the settlement generally assumes a scattered form. Bose and Malhotra (1961) have described the pattern of housing in scattered homesteads. The *jhupas* are put up for residential purposes. When joint families break up, they establish themselves in separate fields. The shifting of the settlement is the shifting of families and not the village. Hence the 'family' and not the 'village' forms the core in the settlement pattern. Homesteads are scattered since it provides better utilization

of land (Malhotra 1964), easy access to the fields and constant protection of the crops.

The settlements in N. W. Jaisalmer and Bikaner are not marked by fixed habitations. People depend on the supply of water in wells which is often brackish. As soon as the water becomes undrinkable, the family searches for a better site leading to a scattered form of settlement (Singh 1952, Sen 1964).

Certain castes like the Raika, Banjara who deal in livestock *traditionally* live in *dhanis* or scattered form of houses. According to Bose and Malhotra (1961), another cause of scattered settlement is the practice of subsistence farming, whereby each family tries to rely completely on the land for whatever it needs.

**Compact inter-dune settlements :** In between the dunes compact settlement is noticed throughout the 'hot' desert (Sen 1964), although the effective distance between villages varies from 5 miles near the urban centres to 15 miles in the interior and 20 miles or more along the dune country. Different families live close together with the cultivated fields at a distance. But the settlements are mostly unplanned. The house-types are more or less similar to those of the dune area. But there are some differences. Not only bullocks and camels but all other livestock are stabled in the compound of the house. Secondly, the *jhupās* are not only used for residential purposes but are also used as community houses or shops. Unlike the dune area, members of the extended family live close to each other. When a joint family breaks up, the compound is partitioned, and people do not move away. In villages close to towns, stones or slabs are also used for the construction of houses.

The factors influencing the compact pattern are given below :

(a) The land surface is in general level with 1 to 3 % of slope (Sen 1964). But the landscape is marked by irregular small sand-dunes and the cover of sand on the soil often reaches a thickness of 40' to 50' (12.20 to 15.24 metres).

Favourable locations are extremely limited. This has led to the congestion of houses resulting in a compact form of settlement.

(b) People in this tract depend on cultivation and animal husbandry. Hence there is a tendency to live close to streams or drainage lines. But here the streams are mostly 'misfit', being short in their course which die out in sand or are choked by the detritus brought down by them during short cloudbursts. This physiographic advantage is extremely limited and, as a result, favourable locations develop a compact pattern of settlement.

(c) Unlike the dune area, the form of settlement is also influenced by caste. It is not the 'family' but the 'caste' which forms the core in the compact settlement pattern.

(d) There is usually a common meeting place in the village which promotes greater intercourse amongst the residents.

Many of the villages in this belt have shifted from their old site during the last century. This, as explained by Bose and Sen (1963) in Korna ( $25^{\circ}12'30''N$  and  $72^{\circ}35'55''E$ ) is due to the needs of defence. Due to the security now available under the Government, villages tend to shift from inhospitable and inaccessible sites to places where amenities or employment is more easily available.

After the partition of India in August 1947, a number of settlements along the border of Barmer district assumed a compact form on account of refugee influx from W. Pakistan. Gadra Road, on the N. Railway on the border is a typical example. All such settlements are found only along the railways or roads. Here square types of stone-houses with tiled roofs have been built. They are similar to houses in West Punjab and Hyderabad district in Sind, with stone (less used) walls and tiled or tin-roofing. The houses are also furnished with wind-catchers in the roofs.

**Scattered settlements of the rocky desert:** Rocky desert conditions prevail mainly in Jalor, Sirohi, Pali, Jodhpur, Nagour

districts. This is located mainly in the tract of Malani Volcanic Hills, sandstone ridges and along the foothills of the Aravalli Range. Along the foothills, dunes are common. But the dunes here are irregular. The hills prevent the onward march of the sands which are deposited on its slopes. Fresh deposition is still going on and there are considerable reasons to believe that, in a vast tract, dunes are formed on buried ridges. It is in this tract that scattered settlements with no systematic plan of the homesteads have developed. The house-types and the factors affecting the distribution of their form and pattern are more or less as in the scattered dune settlements. But there are some differences which are noted below.

(a) The settlements are located not just along the slope of the leeward side of the dunes but at the base, often being 3 to 5 metres away from the base. The bases of the sloping hills are preferred.

(b) The traditional rural household in both the regions is joint. But unlike the dune area, when joint families break up, this is not followed by a new house but the ancestral house is partitioned.

(c) Caste segregation is more common here. Nearly scattered houses often belong to people of the same caste.

(d) Uninhabited villages are rare as in the dune areas. But in case of a famine the houses are left, the dwellers again returning as soon as the adverse period is over.

(e) Formerly isolated dwellings were common. But with immigration and natural multiplication, the compact pattern is becoming more frequent in Jodhpur, Pali, Sirohi and Jalor districts. They are gradually shifting to sites along the new roads. This is evident in Harji and Aohor (Jalor district), Pal (Jodhpur district) and along the Jodhpur—Sirohi road.

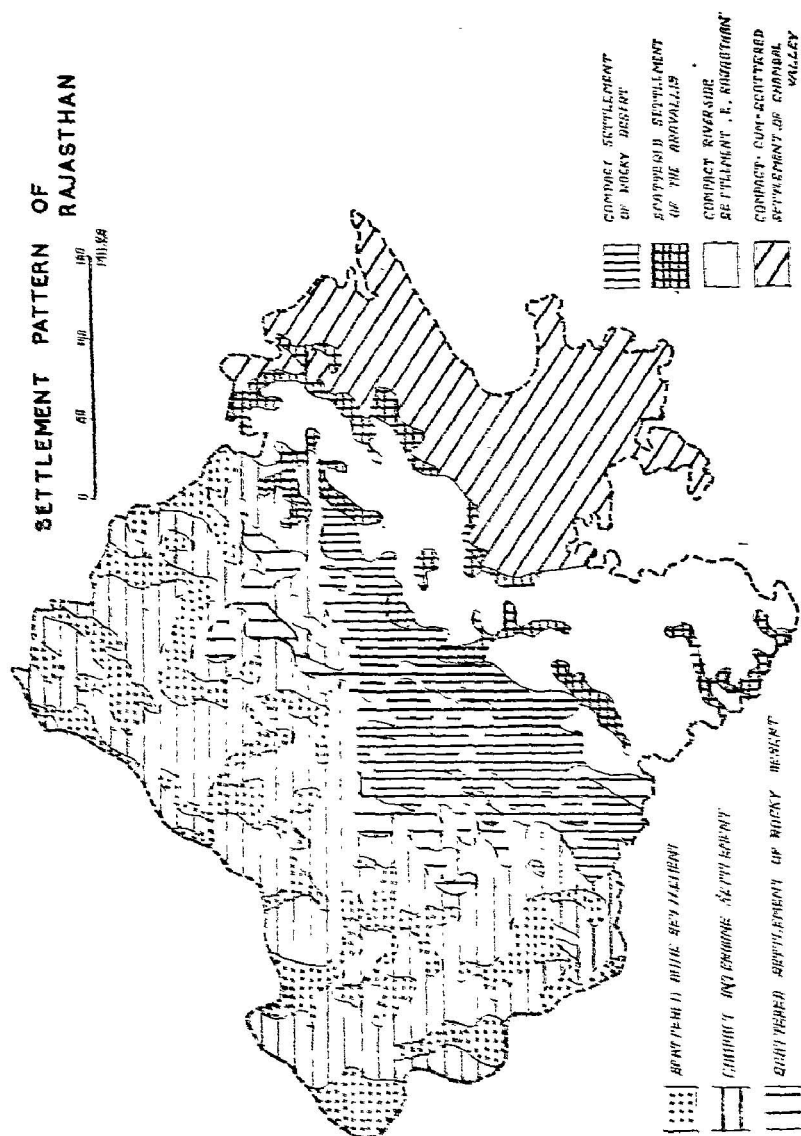
(f) The settlements are often named after the clan, which signifies the importance of caste over family and village in the development of settlements.

(g) House-types are similar to those of the dune area. The only difference is that all the livestock is stabled in enclosures for protection against wild animals and thieves.

(h) Unlike the dune area, where the social relationship is confined within the cluster of houses and isolation is more pronounced, the web of social relationship here is broader, and social life is much more diversified.

**Compact settlement of the rocky desert :** This type extends over the undulating rocky plain or the desert piedmont towards the west of the Aravallis in the districts of Jodhpur, Nagour, Pali, Sirohi and Jalor. The region along with the previous one was earlier denoted as 'Steppe' desert (Sen 1964). Here the drainage lines are better defined than in other parts of the desert. The soil is well drained. It is deep and permeable and permits the practice of agriculture. 50 per cent of the land in this terrain is cultivated and everywhere wells are used for irrigation. Settlements have been present here since the early 10th century. The patronage of the rulers of Marwar and Sirohi also led to the development of settlements. Settlement sites are largely influenced by the water-table and are concentrated along drainage lines.

With the development of diversified economic practices, the Jawai Canal and the influence of urban centres like Pali, Jodhpur, Sumerpur, a tendency to shift the settlements along the road, canal and railway lines has become marked. The growth of population has also led to this shift and development of new settlements. The main reason for compact households is to be traced to the limitation of favourable land for agriculture, which being very limited permit only a small fraction for residential use. This has led to compact settlements. Secondly, the lands were, in the first instance, distributed by the rulers to their subordinate chiefs who became the central figures in starting new settlements. This region sharply differs from other parts of the desert where the family forms the central core of settlement. Rather, the tendency of the people of the same caste or *gotra*





to live close together is sharply marked. This leads to compact settlement in the villages. Each settlement has more than one kin group (Bose and Malhotra 1963).

In the settlements, we meet with houses for different uses like residence, shop, community institutions, etc. The construction of houses is more or less the same as in compact settlements in the inter-dune area.

A significant fact about the settlement is that most of them have a central core with compact households, and *dhanis* or scattered settlements exist in the agricultural fields round the compact nuclear settlement or the central core. These *dhanis* developed at a much later date. The development of the settlement is closely linked with the needs of the chieftains.

#### **Settlement pattern of the Aravallis**

**Scattered settlement :** Along the Aravallis, settlements are rare mainly because of absence of extensive plains where agriculture can be practised. They are present among hill slopes and valleys where either agriculture or pastoral activities is possible. The Bhils and other hill tribes live in groups in small villages in the Aravallis in the districts of Udaipur, Dungarpur, Bhilwara, Ajmer, Jaipur and Alwar (Dashora 1954). In certain favourable locations, settlements have also developed on the top of hills round a fort for defence purposes. But the scattered form is common. Here, relief determines the site and form of settlement. Houses are built of unburnt brick or wattle and mud and have roofs made of country tiles. Along the valleys, kutchha houses with local tiles without any village plan are common. In the remote hills, they are merely made of wooden fencing thatched with straw and leaves. Often the houses are built on platforms or fenced thickly as a protection against wild animals.

#### **Settlement of the eastern semi-arid zone**

This area receives more rainfall and is served well by the Chambal and its tributaries. The landscape, although not frequently, is more or less plain and this, along with the patronage of the ancient rulers, led to the development of rich settlement belts from prehistoric times.

**Compact river-side settlements :** The belt extends along the precipitous foothills of the Aravallis towards its eastern scarp and extends from Alwar in the north to Banswara in the south along the river plains between the Aravallis in the west and its offshoots in the east. Villages are mostly located by the side of the rivers. A compact form without any systematic or planned growth of the households is the prominent characteristic. Caste segregation with strong kinship and lineage ties have also led to the compact form of settlement.

Settlements are located in prosperous agricultural localities. In some localities, a separate class of rich people have come into existence with the development of diversified economic practices like trade or commerce, mining, etc. Caste feeling is gradually becoming less and a tendency of urbanized people living together is developing.

**Compact and scattered settlement of the Chambal Valley :** The belt extends throughout the alluvial plain of the Chambal Valley and is a rich agricultural country. Recent mining and industrial operations and irrigation facilities have brought about a change in the mode of living and affected the pattern and distribution of settlements. This rapid change in economy has been followed by the development of a number of new settlements, expansion and shifting of the old settlements. The complexity is reflected in the distribution of both scattered and compact types of settlements throughout the terrain.

The following characteristics are noticeable :

(a) The settlements are generally located along the river sides and on the flood plains. Settlements have assumed more compact form at the confluence of streams.

(b) Pressure on land is in general high. Settlements were originally scattered. With increased pressure on land they have gradually developed a compact form.

(c) The influence of traditional caste segregation, lineage and kinship has led to the development of compact form.

(d) Towards the west, the villages of the Bhil and other tribes are scattered.

(e) With the shifting of many villages in Bharatpur, Sawai Madhopur, Bundi and Kota districts along the roads or railway lines, the old site is left with only a few scattered houses, where the scattered form of settlement still persists.

(f) Each village has its own common place for meetings and discussion.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful thanks are due to Dr. P. C. Raheja, Director and Dr. B. B. Roy, Head, Basic Resources Survey Division of the Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur, for their keen interest in the work. Thanks are also due to Sri Dave, Draftsman, for his help in cartographic work and Sri S. P. Malhotra, Research Officer, for his valuable suggestions in various ways.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Bose, A. B. and S. P. Malhotra—August, 1961. The form of settlement is a desert village. *Ind. Geog.*, vol. 6, no. 1, pages 9 to 20.
2. Bose, A. B. and S. P. Malhotra—July-September 1963. Anthropo-geographical study of the settlement pattern of a desert village. *Man in India*, vol. 43, no. 3, pages 233 to 249.
3. Bose, A. B. and M. L. Sen.—January-March 1963. Spatial Aspects of rural living. *Man in India*, vol. 43, no. 1, pages 9 to 25.
4. Dashora, Yamuna Lal, 1954. Census 1951 : *District census hand-books*. Part I of Bharatpur ; Jaipur ; Chittorgarh ; Kota and Udaipur, Bikaner.
5. Malhotra, S. P.—March-September 1964. Socio-Economic differences of population inhabiting an arid and semi-arid tract of Western Rajasthan. *Jour. Soc. Res.* vol. VII. no. 2. pages 87 to 103).
6. Raheja, P. C. and A. K. Sen—November-December 1964. Resources in perspective. *Recent development in Rajasthan*, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India. Pages 1 to 28.
7. Sen, A. K.—November-December 1964. Some Geographic features of Rajasthan desert. *Proc. Symp. Prob. Ind. Arid Zone*. Session VII—Geography of desert.
8. ————— 1964. Land slope analysis map of Central Luni Basin. *Nat. Geog. Jour. Ind.* vol. X, pt. 3 and 4.
9. Singh, G.—September 1952. Geography and the extension of desert. *Pro. Symp. Raj. Desert*, Nat. Inst. Sc. Ind. pages 151-152.

# SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WIDOWS IN RURAL SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

A. B. BOSE

M. L. A. SEN

( Received on 19 September 1965 )

**Abstract.** Demographers have, in recent years, shown an interest in the problem of widows in relation to population dynamics (Dandekar 1959, 1961; Dubey 1965) and have studied the relevant variables like age at marriage, widowhood, remarriage, etc. In this paper an attempt has been made to give the age and sex composition of widows, their living arrangements and their economic status.

## *Method of study*

THE data presented here are based on a survey conducted in ten Community Development Blocks in Jalore, Barmer and Sirohi districts. A sample of one in fifteen villages was taken by the method of systematic sampling. In each such village a simple random sample of twenty per cent households was drawn. Schedules were filled by field investigators from the heads of households. The period of data collection was 1961-62.

## *Findings*

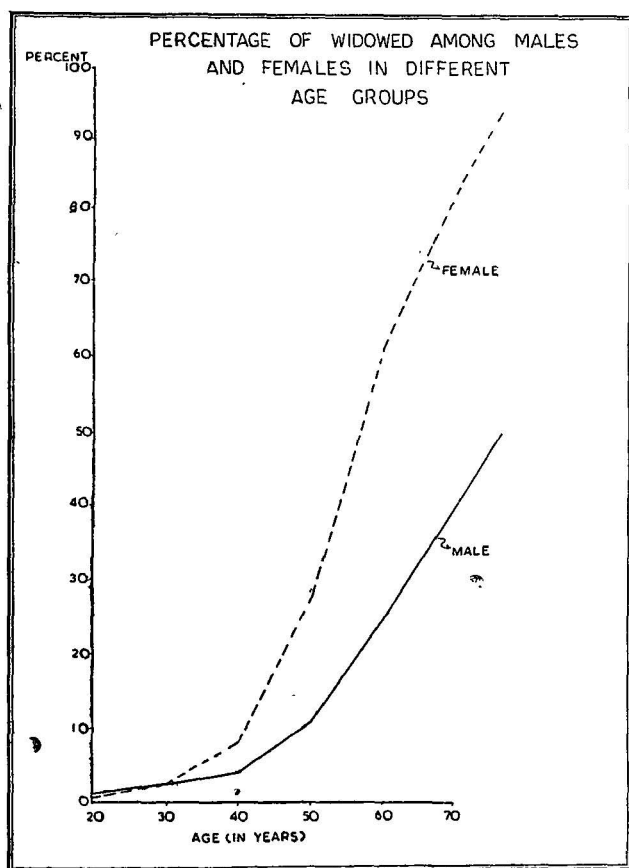
### **Demographic features**

Of the total males 3.8 per cent and of the total females 7.9 per cent are widowed. Their age and sex composition is given in Table 1. The data indicate that more than nine-tenths of the widowed (see Table 1 at end) males and females are 35 years and above. There are more males than females in the earlier age-groups, probably because of higher female mortality from child-

---

Dr. A. B. Bose is Sociologist and Economist and Mr. M. L. A. Sen is Technical Assistant in the Human Factor Studies Division of the Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

birth ; also, usually only younger widows remarry. Subsequently, however, the trend is reversed, possibly because of greater male mortality or because more widowed males than females remarry. On the whole, among the widowed there are 176 females for every 100 males as compared to the general sex ratio of 841 females for every 1,000 males. The average age of a widowed male is 53.7 years while the average age of a widowed female is 56.7 years. The percentage of the widowed among males and females in each age-group has been shown graphically. The graphs seem to be hyperbolic. It will be



observed that from the age-group of 35-44 years onwards there is a steep' rise for both males and females, more so in the case

of the latter. Also, in the age-group of 15-24 years, the percentage of widowed among males is greater than the percentage widowed among females, but subsequently the reverse is true. The gap between the percentages of male and female widows widens with increase in age. The reasons for these trends have been indicated above.

### *Living arrangements*

The relationship of the widowed to the head of the household is given in Table 2. One-fifth of the widowed are household heads while six-tenths are the parents of the household heads. Thus in the rural family organization most of the widowed live with their children, brothers or parents. Also, most of the households are joint. In most cases this is a continuation of the parent-household membership rather than an addition consequent upon widowhood. Almost all the widowed sons and daughters are less than 35 years in age. Almost half the sisters-in-law are 35 years and above, while all the daughters-in-law are less than 35 years. Other widowed male and female relatives are usually close kin who were already members of the household. The data suggest that most of the daughters-in-law and sisters-in-law continue to live in their husband's family even after the death of their spouse, particularly when there are children, as the rights of inheritance and livelihood are secure in the husband's family, and his relatives would like to ensure continuity of the family in the ancestral home and village. Widows usually return to their parental home when they are very young or when it is intended to remarry them or when they suffer from indignities and oppression in the husband's family.

The distribution of the number of widowed persons per household shows that almost three-tenths of the households have widowed members (Table 3). The number of widowed persons per household is 0.33. The coefficient<sup>2</sup> of correlation between number of widowed persons per household and size of such households is +0.140 which is significant, indicating that the number of widowed persons tends to increase with size.

### *Economic status*

The age and sex composition of the workers and dependents among the widowed is given in Table 4. The data show that although for males widowhood makes no difference so far as participation in the labour force is concerned, for females the percentage of workers in each age-group declines with an abrupt fall after the age of 54. The percentage of workers among the female widowed, 15 years and above, is only 32.7 as compared to 77.3 per cent among all women 15 years and above. This may be due to certain socio-cultural values and the higher concentration of widows from certain castes like Rajput, Mahajan, etc., (since remarriage of widows is not permitted in these castes) among whom women do not work on account of the purdah system.

Since all the employment is in the village itself in agriculture, animal husbandry and the socio-economic needs of the rural community, the occupational distribution of widowed workers follows the same trend in the region as of others. Amongst females almost all are family workers.

### *Conclusions*

The remarriage of widows is not permissible only in a few castes like Rajput, Purohit, Mahajan and Brahman who constitute 24.7 per cent of the population in the region surveyed. All the other castes see a positive value in remarrying widows, particularly the younger ones without any issue. This practice, when viewed in the context of a situation in which those placed lower in the hierarchy try to climb the ladder by giving up customs or occupations considered debasing by those highest in ritual status, shows the orientation of these castes.

Since the percentage of widowed females in the reproductive period (15-44 years) is only 3.1 per cent of the married females in the reproductive period, the impact of widowhood in limiting population growth seems to be limited. It is likely to decline further due to improving medical facilities, education and rise in age at marriage.

The living arrangements of the widowed show that in the rural family organization it is the family and its continuity which count. This explains why even when remarriage is permitted, usually only the younger widows without children remarry. Besides, most daughters-in-law and sisters-in-law continue to live in their husband's family even after the death of their spouse, particularly when there are children, as the livelihood and status of the unit are assured within the family.

The greater dependence among widowed women (mostly mothers of the household head) compared to others does not seem to affect the efficiency of the farm family for agricultural operations, since most of them are from joint households with adequate labour force to meet needs. The rural farm family is, thus, able to shelter effectively the widowed female. No special measures for their rehabilitation are normally required except when widowhood results in destitution.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful to the Director for his guidance and for providing research facilities. Thanks are due to Sarvashree S. P. Malhotra, P. C. Saxena, S. K. Johory and L. P. Bharara for their assistance in data collection.

TABLE 1

*Age and sex composition of the widowed*

Age (in years)	Male		Female		Total	
15-24	9	4.6	3	0.8	12	2.2
	(75.0)		(25.0)		(100.0)	
25-34	19	9.6	15	4.3	34	6.2
	(55.9)		(44.1)		(100.0)	
35-44	17	8.6	32	9.2	49	9.0
	(34.7)		(65.3)		(100.0)	
45-54	45	22.7	98	28.1	143	26.1
	(31.5)		(68.5)		(100.0)	
55+	108	54.5	201	57.6	309	56.5
	(41.9)		(58.1)		(100.0)	
Total	198	100.0	349	100.0	547	100.0
	(36.2)		(63.8)		(100.0)	



TABLE 2

*Age of the widowed and relationship with household head*

Relationship	Age (in years)					Total	%
	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+		
Head	1	9	15	34	63	122	22.3
Son	5	5	—	1	—	11	2.0
Daughter	1	3	1	—	—	5	0.9
Father	—	—	—	3	36	39	7.1
Brother	3	4	2	6	2	17	3.1
Other male rel.	—	—	—	1	7	8	1.5
Mother	—	—	21	93	191	305	55.8
Sister	—	1	—	—	1	2	0.4
Daughter-in-law	—	4	—	—	—	4	0.7
Sister-in-law	2	7	7	3	1	20	3.6
Other female rel.	—	—	3	1	8	12	2.2
Male non-rel.	—	—	—	1	—	1	0.2
Female non-rel.	—	1	—	—	—	1	0.2
Total	12	34	49	143	309	547	100.0

TABLE 3

*Number of widowed persons per household*

No. per household	No.	%
None	1,152	69.9
1	452	27.4
2	40	2.4
3	5	0.3
Total	1,649	100.0

TABLE 4

*Age and sex composition of workers and dependents among the widowed*

Age (in years)	Males			Females		
	Workers	Others	Total	Workers	Others	Total
15-25	9 (100.0)	—	9 (100.0)	3 (100.0)	—	3 (100.0)
25-34	19 (100.0)	—	19 (100.0)	13 ( 86.7)	2 (13.3)	15 (100.0)
35-44	17 (100.0)	—	17 (100.0)	25 ( 78.1)	7 (21.9)	32 (100.0)
45-54	45 (100.0)	—	45 (100.0)	54 ( 55.1)	44 (44.9)	98 (100.0)
55+	64 ( 59.3)	44 (40.7)	108 (100.0)	19 (9.5)	182 (90.5)	201 (100.0)
Total	154 ( 77.8)	44 (22.2)	198 (100.0)	114 (32.7)	235 (67.3)	349 (100.0)

TABLE 5

*Sex and main occupation of widowed workers*

Occupation	Males		Females	
	No.	%	No.	%
Cultivation	118	76.6	102	89.5
Raising livestock	14	9.1	6	5.2
Agricultural and casual labour	4	2.6	5	4.4
Other	18	11.7	1	0.9
Total	154	100.0	114	100.0

## REFERENCES

- Dandekar, K. 1959 *Demographic Survey of Six Rural Communities*. Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
- Dandekar, K. 1961 'Widow Remarriage in Six Rural Communities in Western India'. *International Population Union Conference*, New York.
- Dubey, B. R. 1965 'Widow Remarriage in Madhya Pradesh', *Man in India*, 45, 50-56.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Contribution from the Human Factor Studies Division, Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur.
2. This was calculated only for households having widowed members.

# MARRIAGE AMONG THE BHILS

RAM AHUJA

( Received on 28 May 1966 )

**Abstract.** The author analysed 415 cases of marriage among the Bhil tribe of Rajasthan. He has described the ages at marriage, different forms of the selection of mates, types of marriage and compensatory payment made in favour of the bride, and the distance between villages where marriages have taken place. He has also indicated briefly the restrictions imposed by custom on the selection of mates.

**M**ARRIAGES are celebrated generally in April-May. One reason for this may be that with the coming of rains in July-August, the Bhils remain busy in their fields for four to five months, while in April-May they remain practically free. Secondly, because of the custom of bride-price, the Bhils have frequently to borrow money, and since borrowing and repayment of loans depend on harvests, getting loans in this period is much easier.

## *Age at marriage*

The study of three generations in 415 Bhil families in Dungarpur, Banswara, and Udaipur districts and Partapgarh Sub-division of Chittorgarh district in southern Rajasthan in 1959 showed a change in attitude towards child marriage and a growing preference for post-puberty marriage. The average age at marriage of boys and girls in three generations was found to be :

Generation	Males	Females
Third ascending generation	14.6	13.3
Second ascending generation	16.4	14.4
First generation	17.8	15.1

The author is Lecturer in Sociology, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. His personal address is 383A, Adarshanagar, Bees Dukan, Jaipur (Rajasthan).

Taking all the 415 cases together, (egos belonged to 1st, 2nd and also to 3rd generation\*) it was found that about half of the marriages were post-adolescent marriages.

Age-groups	No. of Bhils	Percentage
Before 12 years	9	2.2
Between 12-15 "	34	8.2
" 16-18 "	182	43.7
" 19-21 "	151	36.4
" 22-24 "	31	7.5
" 25-27 "	6	1.6
" 28-30 "	1	0.2
Above 30 years	1	0.2
Total	415	100.0

The fact that 10.4 per cent of the Bhils interviewed were married before 15 years of age, 80.1 per cent between 15 and 21 years of age and 2.0 per cent after 24 years of age shows that though pre-puberty marriages exist in Bhil society, they are not common.

Since young men usually marry at a later age than girls, there is normally some disparity in the age of spouses. An analysis of all the marriages showed that :

Wife was older than husband in	7 cases or 1.7% of marriages
Husband and wife were roughly of the same age in	56 " " 13.6% " "
Husband was older than wife by 1 to 3 years in	193 " " 46.5% " "
Husband was older than wife by 4 to 7 years in	144 " " 34.7% " "
Husband was older than wife by 8 years in	15 " " 3.5% " "

\*Of the 415 cases studied, 22.65% belonged to the 18-25 years age-group, 27.23% to 25-35 years age-group, 23.13% to 35-45 years age-group, 15.42% to 45-55 years age-group, 7.47% to 55-65 years age-group and 4.10% were of more than 65 years of age.

In a few cases, the disparity of age in the couple was very striking. For example, in 3 cases, the ages of the husbands were 27, 25 and 21 years, the respective ages of their wives being 14, 15 and 11 years. Similarly, in 3 other cases, the ages of the girls were 21, 19 and 23 years while the respective ages of their husbands were 16, 12 and 14 years.

### *Restrictions on marriage*

One most important features of the selection of mates in Bhil society is that *adakh*s or sibs are exogamous groups (*apni gotar me ne panvo*). The Bhil tribe is divided into twelve exogamous sibs, some of which are : Damor, Rangot or Rot, Kharari, Palat or Godabara, Katara, Pargi, Balonda and Dedun. The members of each sib worship a particular goddess. For example, members of the Damor sib worship Vijahan Mata, the Rangot sib worship Bhed Mata, the Palat sib worship Kanyalo Mata, the Kharari sib worship Amba Mata and so on. In a few cases, members of different sibs worship the same goddess and as such they cannot marry with each other. For example, a Palat may marry a Rangot or a Surat, but a Rangot cannot marry a Surat because both worship the same goddess, Bhed Mata.

Each *adakh* is again divided into sub-sibs. Palat is divided into 24, Rangot into 7, Damor into 4, Kharari into 3 and so on. These sub-sibs, like the sibs, are also exogamous. For example, a Ghugra (of the Palat sib) cannot marry a Ghugra nor can a Bhojat (of the Rangot sib) marry within his own sub-sib.

Besides this restriction, marriage is also not permitted between the two groups—Bhagats and non-Bhagats (two religious sects in Bhil society) to which either of the parents belong. Similarly, Christian Bhils (Hindu Bhils converted to Christianity) do not marry the unconverted. Likewise, a Palia Bhil (Bhil living in a *Pal* or hilly region) does not marry a Bhil living in the plains, though this is not actually prohibited. The difference in the 'way of life' (*uthva bairva no farak*) appears to be the reason for this avoidance.

Besides the above restrictions, kinship regulations (*rakta*

*sambandh*) also prevent a girl from marrying her maternal uncle, cousins or men of the same lineage.

### *Types of marriage*

Marriages among Bhils may be divided, in a broad sense, into five main kinds : marriage through contract (*vidhi vivah*) ; marriage through elopement (*nahi vivah*) ; marriage through mutual love (*natra vivah*) ; marriage by service (*ghar-jamai vivah*) ; forced marriage (*ladi hai lidi vivah*) :

Out of 415 cases studied, in 406 (97.7%) marriages were arranged ; in 4 cases (1.0%) marriages were by elopement ; in 3 cases (0.8%) marriages were by service ; in 2 cases (0.5%) marriages were forced.

In the last two cases, the girls did not like the men nor did their parents countenance the boys, but that did not discourage the swains. They awaited opportunity and when the girls went to fetch water from wells, they carried them off by force with the aid of their friends. When caught, the girls were closely guarded. After some time, however, they became reconciled.

Elopement with young maidens on the occasion of fairs like Gotameshwar, Rishabdeo or Bineshwar etc. is accepted as an approved method of securing wives among the Bhils. It is not only the unmarried girls who elope with young men but even married girls occasionally resort to this practice. Elopement is resorted to as a means of defeating parental opposition. Elopement is in itself a sufficient act to make the run-away couple husband and wife. The couple return when they feel that the parental anger aroused by their conduct has subsided. On return, be it in the next or after six months, generally they are forgiven by their parents. The amount of *dapa* or compensatory payment to the bride's family in such cases is decided either through direct negotiation by the parents or by the panchayat. This amount is always a little more than usual. In the case of unmarried girls, the *dapa* is given to their fathers while in the case of married women, it is given to their former husbands.

Monogamy is the prevailing form of marriage, despite the sanction and prevalence of polygyny. The existing high bride-price discourages polygyny among the Bhils. Very few Bhils have more than one wife. Furthermore, it was found that the first marriage of the man in all cases took place with a virgin and the second and third marriages were generally contracted with a once-married woman who was at that time a widow, a divorcee, an abandoned wife or a seduced woman.

### *Selection of mates*

Out of 406 arranged marriages, in 401 cases (98.77%), mates had been selected by the parents and only in 5 cases (1.23%) selection was made by the parties themselves, though their marriages were finally settled by their parents. Again, out of 401 cases selected by parents, it was only in 9 cases (2.22%) that the parties were consulted and their consent obtained before finally settling their union; in 392 cases (96.55%), the parents did not care to consult their sons or daughters.

TABLE 1  
*Selection of mates*

Category	Number	Percentage
1. Selected by parents		
(a) Without participants' approval	392	96.55
(b) With        "        "	9	2.22
	<hr/> 401	<hr/> 98.77
2. Self-choice		
(a) With parents' approval	5	1.23
(b) Without        "        "	x	x
Total	<hr/> 406	<hr/> 100.0

The qualities and the characteristics (*goon* or *lakhan*) that influence the choice of a mate vary according to sex, family background and the class to which the parties belong.

Generally, in the selection of a bride for a son, the factor mostly taken into consideration is character. It is not only the character of a particular girl that they look into but also of all the sisters, aunts and the mother. Health, efficiency in household work, family background (i.e. family having either an equal status or a higher status, but never a lower one) and economic condition are also taken into consideration. In selecting bridegrooms for daughters, the emphasis is on economic stability, amount of *dapa* and health.

A further analysis of selection showed that generally mates are not selected from far-off villages. Bhils prefer to marry their children into families known directly or indirectly. Out of 415 cases studied, in 60.96% cases, mates were selected from villages within 10 miles of one's own home. The distances are shown below :

TABLE 2

Distance		No. of cases	Percentage
Within	5 miles	92	22.17
„	5-10 „	161	38.79
„	11-20 „	126	30.36
„	21-40 „	18	4.34
„	41-60 „	12	2.89
„	61-80 „	3	0.73
„	81-100 „	2	0.48
Above 100	„	1	0.24
Total		415	100.00

### *Bride-payment*

The amount of payment for a bride varies from 50 rupees to 750 rupees. Till about two decades ago, the amount never exceeded 200 rupees but now it has increased tremendously.



In some villages, resolutions are being passed not to pay *dapa* more than the amount fixed by the Fala-panchayat, but few Bhils seem to stick to such resolutions. For example, in in Bhapora village in Banswara district, a resolution was passed in May 1957 limiting the payment to 210 rupees, but many Bhils paid or received more than 300 rupees. However, in Kesarpura village (Banswara district), people abide by the resolution and do not pay or accept more than 210 rupees as fixed by their panchayat. The amount given by the surveyed Bhils is shown below :

TABLE 3

*Compensatory payment to bride's family*

Amount given	No. of Bhils	Percentage
50 - 100	56	11.9
101 - 200	188	39.9
201 - 300	107	22.7
301 - 400	72	15.2
401 - 500	36	7.6
501 - 600	8	1.7
601 - 700	3	0.6
Above 700	2	0.4
Total	472	100.0

The above figures show that 51.8% of the Bhils paid up to 200 rupees, 37.9% between 200-400 rupees and only 10.3% more than 400 rupees.

---

\* The total number of Bhils in this table is more than the surveyed number of married Bhils because here not only *dapa* given by the interviewee himself but also given for his son or received for his daughter have been included,

In a few places, in the case of widow-remarriage, the amount is fixed as 51 rupees only. Thus, a divorced or a widowed woman may be secured at a lower rate than one who has never been married before. A female who is under the age of puberty also usually commands a lesser price than one who in the eyes of the Bhils is just ripe for marriage.

Bhil women sometimes leave their husbands without obtaining divorce (*chheda phadna*) and form an alliance with another man more acceptable to them. In such cases, the payment that the husband had made to her parents during marriage is to be directly returned to him by the man who now marries his former wife. Such cases are not uncommon.

The *dapa* may be given before or after marriage. In some cases, the marriage cannot take place until this sum is handed over by the bridegroom or his family. In a few cases, the payment is made in instalments. When a substantial portion has been paid, the marriage is celebrated and the balance is paid after marriage.

# DEATH-RITES AMONG MAITHIL BRAHMANS

MAKHAN JHA

**Abstract.** The Maithil Brahmans of North Bihar are great champions of Sanskrit learning. The exactness with which they perform the Shastric rites of death, as described in the present article, shows the hard core of their culture. These rites help them in strengthening the bond of kinship.

## *Rituals in the house*

**A**T present the area of Mithila roughly comprises the districts of Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur, Saharsa, Purnea, northern Monghyr and some portions of Champaran in the State of Bihar.

When it is known that a death is going to occur in the family in a natural way, the performance of *Vaitarni-dan* is first made. A cow of black colour is brought and the dying man is made to hold her tail by hand. A Brahman priest, called Purohit, conducts the rite. The Purohit recites the *mantras* and salutes the cow and the Brahman three times. While performing this rite, a few drops of cow's urine or Ganga water or both are dropped into his mouth. The priest is offered some remuneration either in cash or in kind for this service.

After performing *Vaitarni-dan*, and when death has actually occurred, the body is brought into the courtyard and placed on a *kusa* grass-mat near a *tulasi* (basil) plant. The body is placed with the head towards the north and feet towards the south. Then the eldest woman of the family or of a neighbour's family puts a vermilion mark on the forehead of the deceased's wife. The vermilion mark is removed after some time on the same day. The same woman breaks all the bangles on her wrist. Then one or two green bamboos are brought and a bier is prepared. The bier should be 6'9" by 3'9" in

---

The author is Senior Technical Assistant in the Anthropological Survey of India, Central India Station, Post Box 20, Nagpur (Maharashtra).

length and breadth. It is tied up by ropes of *kusa* grass and sometimes even of *save* grass. A new cloth is brought for wrapping the corpse, locally called *dagak kapara*. The chief mourner called Karta carries the following things to the cremation ground :

*Kusa* grass ( or *durva* grass ). *teel* ( sesamum )  
*Gangauti* ( clay from the Ganga ), five cowrie  
shells, *koha* ( earthen pot ) and fire.

### *Funeral procession*

Four male members lift the bier and take it out through the main gate of the house. The funeral party consists of only men. It is compulsory for the members of the dead man's lineage to join the funeral party. At least one elderly person from each family must be in party. Besides this, most of the villagers also take part in the procession. The funeral party is led by the chief mourner from the home to the cremation ground.

The cremation is preferably performed in one's own land. But every family does not possess a separate cremation ground. So, generally, a common plot of land is allotted for the cremation which is called *Ashmashan* (*Smasan*).

### *Funeral ceremonies*

When the funeral party reaches the cremation ground, the corpse is laid on the ground and two or three elderly members sit there while the rest of the party collect fuel and water. A small trench about five feet long and one foot in depth is dug and four cowries are placed at the four corners of the trench and one in the middle. There are two views regarding the placing of these cowries. Some believe that by placing the cowries in the trench, the particular piece of land is purchased for cremation. The second view is that by placing four cowries at the four corners, the guardian deities of the four directions, called *Dikpalas*, are informed, while one cowrie, which is placed in the middle, goes to inform the god of the sky called *Akash-deva*. Out of these two views, the former is more prevalent among the Maithils.

The wood for the pyre is brought from near-by mango-groves. Boughs and branches are cut for this purpose and the pyre is made ready. The body is bathed and *tilak* mark is made on the forehead and one pair of sacred thread is put on the body. The body is clothed and placed on the pyre. While laying the body on the pyre the head is placed towards the north and feet towards the south. A burning brand called *wuk* is also prepared by the chief mourner. It is a rule that seven knots should be tied on the burning brand with a belief that these seven knots represent the seven *Lokas* of the other world.

The chief mourner takes a bath and changes his cloth and wears a piece of white new cloth. He also puts a piece of cloth on his body like a sacred thread which is called *Uttree* (Sans. *Uttariya*) and wears it for twelve days. This unsewn dress is the sign of mourning. He then takes the burning brand in his hand and circumambulates the pyre and each time touches the mouth of the corpse with the fire. While making a round of the pyre, the chief mourner also touches the four corners of the pyre. Later on the pyre is lit by other members of the party and each of them offers five pieces of wood.

When the pyre is burnt to ashes, some of the burnt bones are collected after three days for immersion in the Ganga. The funeral party led by the chief mourner returns home, when none of the party may look behind. They reach a pond where each of them takes a bath and offers water in the name of the deceased. It is called *Tilanjali*. After the libation of water they come to the dead man's house where they wash their feet and then touch a piece of iron, a stone and fire. They also chew mustard seeds. These four objects are for ritual purification of their bodies.

### *Period of pollution*

The pollution period, called *asaucha*, begins immediately after the death of the individual. It remains for ten days. All the members of the village belonging to the *gotra* (clan) of the deceased are also polluted. During pollution, they do not take

fish, meat and oil, and shaving or combing the hair is also prohibited. They are not also permitted to offer worship to their house deity, called *Gasauni*. The chief mourner does not take salt, vegetables, fish, meat, oil, curds, pulses, etc. during mourning. All sons of the deceased should not take salt, but in the case of illness and also under exceptional circumstances, salt may be allowed for the sons, excepting the chief mourner.

From the first to the tenth day, the chief mourner takes a meal of rice cooked in milk. It is locally called *Argasnak bhat*. It is cooked by the mourner himself, but in exceptional cases an old female relative may cook it for him. The meal is cooked in a new earthen pot which is replaced daily. While taking meals the chief mourner daily invites the spirit for taking his share.

### *Pinda-dan during pollution*

During this period, *pindas* (rice-balls) are offered in the name of the spirit called *dasa-gatrak pinda* or the *pinda* of the organs. It is believed that the ten *pindas* offered during this period constitute the ten organs of the spirit, which on the tenth day get complete form. The ten *pindas* represent the organs in the following order :

<i>Pinda</i>	<i>Name of the organ</i>
1. Offered on the first day	Head of the dead spirit or <i>preta</i>
2. Offered on the second day	Neck and shoulder
3. Offered on the third day	Heart
4. Offered on the fourth day	Backbone
5. Offered on the fifth day	Navel
6. Offered on the sixth day	Waist and hip
7. Offered on the seventh day	Thighs
8. Offered on the eighth day	"Knee, nails and feet
9. Offered on the ninth day	Legs
10. Offered on the tenth day	On this day the <i>preta</i> gets complete form and feels hunger and thirst.

As the spirit gets complete form and feels hunger and thirst after these ten days, the offering of food and libation of water is essential by means of the *Ekadasha* and *Dwadasha karma*.

### *Collection of bones*

The bones, called *asthi*, are collected on the third day. The chief mourner and Mahapatra (a priestly caste specialized in conducting mortuary rites) go to the cremation ground in the morning of the third day where the chief mourner first of all sprinkles milk and water on the ashes, after which the bones are collected. The bones are placed in an earthen pot which is further laid within another bigger earthen pot. The chief mourner also plants a *tulasi* plant over the pyre. He then offers one *pinda*. The Mahapatra conducts the rite and chants some sacred *mantras*. This rite is called *Sara jhappi*. The collected bones are brought and sent for immersion into the Ganga.

On the same day, a small earthen pot full of water is hung in the verandah of the deceased's room. A very small hole is made in the bottom of the pot, in which two or three pieces of *kusa* grass are wedged in, so that the water of the pot drips through the hole. Every morning a lamp and some of the favourite things of the deceased are offered in his name. For example, if the deceased was in the habit of smoking, some pieces of tobacco may be offered daily at the time of offering the lighted lamp.

### *Shaving ceremony for purification*

On the morning of the tenth day, the shaving ceremony, locally called *chhaur* or *samundan kriya*, is performed. A BARBER comes to shave the hair, moustache and beard of all the male mourners. They also get the nails of their hands and feet pared. All the male members of the deceased's clan also shave their hair, moustache and beards and pare the nails. They change their sacred thread on the day of the shaving ceremony. The female members only pare their nails and do not shave the hair. On that day, all earthen pots in daily use in the house and also of the families of the same *gotra* are thrown away. All rooms and the courtyard

of the deceased's family and those of the clan members are plastered with cowdung for purification.

### *Variations*

The above rites are performed in the case of death of grown-up persons. The death ceremony of an infant is not performed as elaborately as above. The sex of the deceased is also an important factor in the performance of death-rites; at certain stages the performance differs according to sex and age.

In the case of an infant, the period of pollution is reduced. If the deceased was under one year, only parents are regarded as polluted for one night or in some cases only for three days. The rest of the members of the lineage and clan are not affected. But the death of a boy who has gone through the sacred thread ceremony entails full-fledged defilement. Among Maithils, a girl is regarded as a child before her marriage, and in the case of her death before marriage, the pollution is imposed only for three days.

The performance of *Vaitarni-dan* is not made in the case of infants and the body is buried. If the deceased was over five years, the body is cremated; but no sacred thread is offered at the cremation ground. In such cases, when the body is buried, the funeral party includes hardly two or three persons. The body is carried by an elderly person. A trench is dug in the burial ground where the body is placed north and south. All the belongings of the deceased are left there and even the haft of the spade is taken out and left there. Then they return after bathing and assemble at the house where they touch iron, stone and fire and chew a few mustard seeds. If the deceased was under one year, the shaving ceremony is performed on the same day, but if the dead was over one year, it is performed on the third day. The courtyard and rooms are plastered with cowdung, but no further performances are made after that.

When a married woman dies, vermilion is put on her forehead and bangles are not broken. If the deceased was a



widow, no vermilion mark is made and such is the case with unmarried girls, but her (unmarried girl's) bangles are broken at the cremation ground while her body rests on the pyre. In the case of the death of a married woman, if she has left a small baby, then, in the funeral procession, a type of mustard seed, locally called *ulta sariso*, is thrown along the way. It is believed that when a woman dies leaving a small baby, she quite often returns to take the baby back with her to the world of spirits. Thus in order to save the baby, people throw seeds on the way so that when the spirit comes to take the baby, it will be absorbed in picking up all the seeds thrown on the way. This obviously being a very difficult job, it is believed that the spirit will never be able to collect all the mustard seeds and thus would not be able to reach home to fetch the child. Except for these few deviations, all performances remain the same.

### *Observations*

The present study reveals the importance of ceremonies associated with the death when kinsmen are united and the bond of kinship is more strongly felt. The solidarity of the family and the lineage and finally of Maithil society, as a whole, is therefore strengthened by these rites which appear to be only a means of sending the departed soul to heaven to rest in peace.

# ON THE PALM-PRINTS OF THE HAJONG

BHUBAN M. DAS

( Received on 25 February 1966 )

**Abstract :** Palm-prints of 65 male Hajong were collected in 1957 from the villages neighbouring Tikirkilla, a small locality situated at a distance of about 43 miles from Goalpara town on the way to Tura. Finger-print patterns of the Hajong were also studied by the present writer (1959).

**I**n Assam the Hajong are chiefly distributed in South Goalpara and parts of the Garo Hills district. They are an agricultural people. By some authorities they are regarded as a member of the great 'Bodo race'. They however, claim to form a branch of the Kshatriya Varna. But the Government has recognized them as a tribe.

The present article deals with the palm print analysis of the Hajong. Analyses have been made in order to find out the frequencies of the various main line formulae, endings of main line, patterns on the hypothenar, thenar and interdigital areas and distribution of axial triradii. The main-line index has also been calculated. The Hajong have been compared with some tribes of Assam in respect of the frequencies of some important main line formulae.

## *Data*

Table 1 shows the frequencies of the various main line formulae among the Hajong.

In Table 2 the frequencies of some important main line formulae have been shown.

---

\* Abstract was published in the Proc. of the 53rd Session of the Indian Science Congress, 1966.

The author is Reader in Anthropology, Gauhati University. His personal address is Chandra Kumar Road, Panbazar, Gauhati, Assam.

TABLE 1

*Frequencies of Main Line Formulae (n=65)*

Formulae	Left	Right	Total
	%	%	%
11.9.7.3	4.61	10.76	7.70
11.9.7.5'	—	3.07	1.53
11.0.7.3	—	3.07	1.53
11.0.7.5'	1.53	—	0.77
11.X.7.3	3.07	—	1.53
11.7.7.3	1.53	—	0.77
9.7.5".3	7.69	12.30	10.00
9.7.5'.3	12.30	16.92	14.61
9.7.5".4	1.53	3.07	2.30
9.7.5".5'	—	1.53	0.77
9.9.5".3	—	1.53	0.77
9.9.5".5'	—	3.07	1.53
9.X.5'.3	1.53	—	0.77
9.X.5".3	—	7.69	3.84
9.0.5'.3	1.53	3.07	2.30
9.0.5".2	1.53	—	0.77
7.5".5'.3	36.92	23.07	30.00
7.5".5".3	—	3.07	1.53
7.5".5'.2	7.69	1.53	4.61
7.5".5".5'	—	6.15	3.07
7.5'.3.2	3.07	—	1.53
7.5'.5'.3	10.76	—	5.38
7.5'.4.2	1.53	—	0.77
7.7.5'.3	1.53	—	0.77
7.X.5'.2	—	1.53	0.77

TABLE 2

*Some important Main Line Formulae among the Hajong*

Formulae	Left	Right	Total
	%	%	%
11.9.7—	4.61	13.84	9.23
9.7.5—	21.53	33.84	27.69
7.5.5—	55.38	33.84	44.61

It appears from Table 1 that the formula 7.5.5— occurs in the highest percentage (44.61%) among the Hajong. It is followed by the formula 9.7.5— (27.69%). The percentage (9.23%) of 11.9.7— is also considerable. Again, when the two hands are considered separately, a different picture is observed. In the left hand the order of these three formulae, namely, 7.5.5— (55.38%), 9.7.5— (21.53%) and 11.9.7— (4.61%) is somewhat similar to that of the combined values of the two hands. But in the right hand 9.7.5— and 7.5.5— are found in equal percentages (33.84%). The percentage (13.84%) of 11.9.7— is much higher.

As a consequence, the two hands differ from each other in respect of endings of lines D, C and B. This will be obvious from Table 3.

TABLE 3

*Endings of Main Line D, C, B and A*

Endings	Line D		
	Left	Right	Total
	%	%	%
11	10.76	16.92	13.84
9	26.15	49.23	37.70
7	63.07	33.84	48.46

Endings	Left	Right	Total
<b>Line C</b>			
9	4.61	18.46	11.53
7	24.61	33.84	29.23
5"	44.61	33.84	39.23
5'	15.38	—	7.70
X	6.15	7.69	6.92
0	4.61	6.15	5.38
<b>Line B</b>			
7	10.76	16.92	13.84
5"	10.76	38.46	24.61
5'	73.84	44.61	59.23
4	1.53	—	0.77
3	3.07	—	1.53
<b>Line A</b>			
5'	1.53	13.84	7.70
4	1.53	3.07	2.30
3	81.53	81.53	81.53
2	15.38	1.53	8.46

Line D ends in 7, 9 and 11 in 63.07%, 26.15% and 10.76% in the left hand and in 33.84%, 49.23% and 16.92% in the right hand respectively. The combined data (left+right) show that this line ends in 7 in 48.46%, in 9 in 37.70% and in 11 in 13.84%.

When the two hands are combined, line C ends in 5" in 39.23%. It is followed by 7 (29.23%), 9 (11.53%) and 5' (7.70%). In 6.92% it is abortive (X), while in 5.38% it is absent (0). Similarly, in the left hand line C ends in 5" in 44.61%. It is followed by 7 (24.61%), 5' (15.38%), 9 (4.61%), X (6.15%) and 0 (4.61%). But in the right hand line C ends in 5" and 7 in equal percentages (33.84%). It ends in 9 in 18.46%. It is abortive in 7.69% and absent in 6.15%.

Line B ends in 5' in 73.84% and 44.61% in the left and the right hand respectively. It does so in 59.23% when the two hands are taken together. It ends in 5'' in 10.76% in the left and 33.46% in the right. It ends in 7 in 10.76% in the left and 16.92% in the right.

Line A ends in 3 in most of the cases (81.33% in both hands). In the left the next highest percentage is shown by 2 (15.38%) and in the right by 5' (13.84%). When the two hands are combined line A ends in 3 in 81.33%, in 2 in 8.46% and in 5' in 7.70%.

The value of main-line index is  $5.85 \pm .18$  in the left hand and  $6.86 \pm .18$  in the right. When the two hands are taken together it becomes  $6.35 \pm .18$ .

It appears from Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7 that the differences between the two hands in respect of patterns in hypothenar, thenar and interdigital areas and also in distribution of axial triradii are not much. And therefore the two hands have not been dealt with separately.

TABLE 4

*Patterns on Hypothenar Area*

Patterns	Left	Right	Total
	%	%	%
A <sup>U</sup>	36.92	27.69	32.30
A <sup>C</sup>	13.84	13.84	13.84
A <sup>C</sup> / L <sup>R</sup>	—	3.07	1.53
L <sup>U</sup>	7.69	7.69	7.69
L <sup>R</sup>	9.23	10.76	10.00
L <sup>U</sup> / A <sup>C</sup>	—	1.53	0.77
A <sup>U</sup> / V	1.53	—	0.77
V	1.53	—	0.77
0	29.23	35.38	32.30

It is apparent from Table 4 that in the hypothenar area, the most dominating pattern is arch (46.14%). 32.30% of the arches are radial, while 13.84% open towards carpus. Loops occur in 17.69% of which 7.69% are ulnar and 10.00% are radial. Open fields (0) are seen in 32.30%.

TABLE 5

*Patterns on Thenar and I Interdigital Areas*

Patterns	Left	Right	Total
	%	%	%
0	64.61	86.15	75.38
V	20.00	10.76	15.38
L	9.23	1.53	5.38
L/V	4.61	—	2.30
L/L	1.53	—	0.77
W	—	1.53	0.77

In the thenar and I interdigital areas in most of the cases (75.38%) there are no indications of any pattern. Vestiges are observed in 17.68%. Loops are not frequent (8.45%). Whorl is rare (0.77%).

TABLE 6

*Patterns on II, III and IV Interdigital Areas*

Patterns	Left	Right	Total
	%	%	%
0-0-L	63.07	60.00	61.53
0-0-0	3.07	6.15	4.61
0-L-0	7.69	16.92	12.30
0-L-L	1.53	3.07	2.30
0-0-D	18.46	4.61	11.53
0-0-V	3.07	3.07	3.07
0-V-0	—	1.53	0.77
0-D-L	—	1.53	0.77
D-L-L	—	1.53	0.77
0-L-D	3.07	1.53	2.30

Table 6 shows that in the II, III and IV interdigital areas the combination 0-0-L is most frequent (61.53%). The combination 0-L-0 (12.30%) and 0-0-D (11.53%) are also found in considerable numbers. The combinations 0-0-0 (4.61%), 0-L-L (2.30%), 0-0-V (3.07%) and 0-L-D (2.30%) are not frequent.

TABLE 7

*Axial Triradii*

Patterns	Left	Right	Total
	%	%	%
<i>t</i>	55.38	47.69	51.53
<i>t'</i>	12.30	13.84	13.07
<i>tt'</i>	3.07	3.07	3.07
0	16.92	23.07	20.00
?	12.30	12.30	12.30

As regards axial triradius, the type *t* is met with very frequently (51.53%). Type *t'* also occurs in considerable numbers (13.07%). *tt'* is rare (3.07%). In 20.00% of the cases the triradius is absent (0). In 16 prints the carpal region was not very distinct. Therefore in those prints the axial triradius could not be observed properly.

*Comparison*

In Table 8 the Hajong have been compared with the Rabha, the Kachari and the Khasi tribes of Assam in respect of frequencies of main line formulae. The Rabha and the Kachari belong to the Bodo group and as such are akin to the Hajong. The Khasi form a separate group, being linguistically quite different from the Bodo group. The data on these peoples, namely, the Rabha, the Kachari and the Khasi, were also collected by the present writer.



TABLE 8

*Comparison*

People	Formulae		
	11.9.7 -	9.7.5 -	7.5.5 -
	%	%	%
Hajong	9.23	27.69	44.61
Rabha	4.88	21.42	26.69
Kachari	12.00	31.33	35.33
Khasi	14.18	23.13	34.51

It appears from the above table that all the populations exhibit the formula 7.5.5 - in the highest frequency. The next highest percentage is shown by 9.7.5 -, which is followed by 11.9.7 -. But in the Rabha and the Kachari the difference between the percentages of 7.5.5 - and 9.7.5 - is not very much, while this difference is marked among the Hajong and the Khasi.

## REFERENCES

Das, Bhuban M.

1959 Finger Prints of the Hajong,  
*Man in India*, Vol. 39, No. 1.1960 *Ethnic Affinities of the Rabha*,  
Gauhati University, Gauhati.

# MID-DIGITAL HAIR AMONG THE SA-ARA AND KONDH OF ORISSA

K. C. TRIPATHY

**Abstract.** The author compares the occurrence of mid-digital hair among the Sa-ara (110 subjects) and Kondh (51 subjects) of Orissa and shows the similarity existing between the two.

## *Introduction*

THE distribution of hair on the dorsal surface of the middle phalanx of the digits have already attained genetic significance.

The present paper aims at finding out the mode of mid-digital hair pattern in two separate tribes, namely, the Sa-ara (Saora, Savara) and the Kondh. The Sa-ara form an important element of the tribal population of Orissa. They are found in most of the districts of the State, their main concentration being in Ganjam and Koraput districts. Comparative study of a small trait of genetic importance is aimed at finding out the affinities of the tribes.

## *Material and method*

Sa-ara data include the mid-digital analysis of 110 adults, and they were mainly collected from villages neighbouring Bhubaneswar (New Capital) in the Puri district, Orissa. The samples were collected from the villages of Nuapalli, Siripur, Russelgarh, Baramunda, Baragarh and Ghatikia.

Kondh data include the mid-digital analysis of 51 adults and they were mainly collected from villages neighbouring G. Udayagiri town in the Phulbani district, Orissa. The samples were collected from Muklingia, Gundabaju, Kumbar Kupa, Pukulingia and Dakedi.

---

The author is Lecturer in Physical Anthropology, Utkal University. His personal address is Vani Vihar, Bhubaneswar-4, Orissa.

Observation was made with the help of an illuminated magnifier (torch type). A piece of cotton soaked in carbon disulphide was used to clean the middle segments of the digits (hand) before examination. A few strands of hair present on the dorsal surface of the phalanx were counted and carefully noted.

TABLE 1\*

*Middle phalangeal hair (M. P. H.) among the  
Sa-ara and Kondh*

No. of subjects	Tribe	No. with M. P. H. on both hands	%	No. without M. P. H.	%
110	Sa-ara	41	37.27	69	62.72
51	Kondh	19	37.25	32	62.7

Analysing the frequency of distribution of mid-digital hair among the Sa-ara and Kondh, no significant frequency distribution was noted. Out of 110 adult Sa-ara, only 41 (37.27%) possess mid-digital hair in one or more than one finger and it is similar in the case of the Kondh, 19 (31.25%). But the total absence of mid-digital hair in the case of Sa-ara is 69 (62.72%) and in the case of Kondhs is 32 (62.7%) and the figures are similar. The increase in absence may be due to destruction by hard manual labour, as both the tribes are agricultural.

TABLE 2

*Distribution of mid-digital hair on right and left hands separately*

Fingers	Tribe		Absent		Present		Scanty		Plenty		Total	
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
II	Sa-ara	Rt	109	99.10	1	0.90	—	—	—	—	1	0.90
		Lt	109	99.10	1	0.90	—	—	—	—	1	0.90
	Kondh	Rt	48	94.0	3	5.9	—	—	—	—	3	5.9
		Lt	49	96.1	2	3.9	—	—	—	—	2	3.9

Scanty = up to 5 hairs.

Plenty = 6 or more hairs.

Fingers	Tribe		Absent		Present		Scanty		Plenty		Total	
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
III	Sa-ara	Rt	85	77.27	13	11.81	12	10.90	25	22.72		
		Lt	86	78.18	16	14.54	8	7.27	24	21.81		
	Kondh	Rt	40	78.4	8	15.7	3	5.9	11	21.57		
		Lt	36	70.4	11	21.6	4	7.8	15	29.40		
IV	Sa-ara	Rt	73	66.35	25	20.72	12	10.90	37	33.63		
		Lt	75	68.18	20	18.18	15	13.63	35	31.81		
	Kondh	Rt	36	70.4	12	23.5	3	5.9	15	29.40		
		Lt	33	64.7	13	25.5	5	9.8	18	35.3		
V	Sa-ara	Rt	101	91.81	7	6.36	2	1.81	9	8.18		
		Lt	101	91.81	8	7.27	1	0.90	9	8.18		
	Kondh	Rt	44	86.2	7	13.7	—	—	7	13.7		
		Lt	41	80.4	8	15.7	2	3.9	10	19.6		

In analysing the data digit-wise (as shown in Table 2), it is observed that increase of right hand hair in the case of Sa-ara was present on the middle segments of finger II in 1 case (0.90%) only ; on that of finger III in 25 cases (22.72%) ; on finger IV in 37 cases (33.63%) ; on finger V in 9 cases (8.18%). Similarly, in the case of the left hand on II, III, IV and V fingers, they are 1 (0.90%), 24 (21.81%), 35 (31.81%) and 9 (8.18%) respectively.

In the case of the Kondh, the same phenomena of increase of mid-digital hair in the right hand is observed. On finger II in 3 cases (5.9%), on finger III in 11 cases (21.57%) and on finger IV in 15 cases (29.40%). But on finger V there is sharp reduction in frequency which is observed in 7 cases (13.7%) only. Similarly, in the case of the left hand on II, III, IV and V finger there are 2 cases (3.9%), 15 cases (29.40%), 18 cases (35.3%) and 10 cases (19.6%) respectively.

It is thus observed that digit IV has the maximum frequency of middle-phalangeal hair and digit II the least

in the case of both the tribes. Digit III comes second in order and digit V shows a sharp reduction in the frequency distribution of middle phalangeal hair. No significant bimanual difference is observed.

TABLE 3

*Distribution of middle phalangeal hair and combination of digits in various populations*

Group	No. Tested	Author	Percent on digit combination							Total	
			0	IV	III-IV	IV-V	III-IV-V	II-III	IV-V	Combination	
White	180	Danforth (1921)	38.9	15.6	18.3	2.8	20.6	3.3	0.5	100.00	
White	146	Garn (1951)	37.7	12.3	21.2	0.0	25.3	2.7	1.4	100.6	
Indian, male and female combined	250	Chopra (1953)	75.2	6.4	7.2	0.0	5.6	1.6	0.8	96.8	
Japanese	25	Danforth (1921)	68.0	8.0	16.0	0.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	100.00	
Negro	74	Danforth (1921)	83.7	6.8	1.4	4.0	1.4	0.0	2.7	100.00	
Nokte Naga	111	Kumar (1954)	54.05	5.41	14.41	2.70	18.02	4.50	0.90	99.99	
Rajbonshi (Midnapur)	284	Chou- dhury (1960)	Rt 62.68	17.96	12.68	0.0	4.58	0.35	1.76	100.01	
		Lt	61.97	17.60	13.38	1.41	3.87	0.35	1.41	99.99	
Sa-ara Orissa	110	Present study	Rt 63.63	13.63	14.54	0.9	4.54	0.0	1.90	99.14	
		Lt	66.36	10.9	11.72	0.0	7.27	0.0	1.81	98.06	
Kondh Orissa	55	Present study	Rt 29.4	27.3	19.8	7.9	9.7	1.9	3.9	99.9	
		Lt	31.4	25.5	17.6	9.8	13.7	1.9	0.0	99.9	

## Conclusion

Danforth (1921) determined the racial differences in the occurrence of hair in the mid-digital region. From a study of various groups he concluded that American Indians, Negro and Japanese have gone further towards freeing the mid-digital hair than the Whites. The present study among the Sa-ara and Kondh shows that mid-digital hair is equally distributed on the right and left hands of the subjects. Some individuals show right-left differences in the digit combination, but no individual exhibits a trend in a particular direction. On the basis of mid-digital hair analysis the Sa-ara and Kondh can be considered possessing similar affinities based on genetical traits.

In order to test the real position this should be supplemented by further observation on anthropometry, serology and dermatoglyphics etc. Future studies are needed for this.

## REFERENCES

- |                   |      |   |
|-------------------|------|---|
| Boyd, C. William  | 1950 | <i>Genetics and Races of Man</i> , Boston.  |
| Stern, Curt       |      | <i>Principles of Human Genetics</i> .   |
| Chopra, S. R. K.  | 1953 | On the distribution and inheritance of the hair on the mid-digital region of the fingers (hand) in Indians. <i>The Eastern Anthropologist</i> , Vol. No. 3, pp. 172-176.    |
| Choudhury, D. Roy | 1960 | Middle-phalangeal hair among Rajbanshis of Midnapur, West Bengal, <i>The Eastern Anthropologist</i> , Vol. No. 2, pp. 182-187.  |
| Danforth, C. H.   | 1921 | Distribution of hair in digits in Man, <i>American Journal of Physical Anthropology</i> , Vol. IV, pp. 189-204.   |
| Garn, S. M.       | 1951 | The use of middle-phalangeal hair in population studies. <i>Amer. J. Phys. Anth.</i> Vol-9 : 3, pp. 325-333.  |
| Kumar, N.         | 1954 | Taste, mid-phalangeal hair and occipital hair whorls among Nokte Naga. <i>Bull. Dept. Anthropol.</i> Govt. of India, Indian Museum, Calcutta-13. Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 61-67. |
| Sarkar, S. S.     | 1957 | <i>A Laboratory manual of Somatology</i> , Calcutta.  |
| Tripathy, K. C.   | 1963 | Middle-phalangeal hair among the Saoras of Puri, Orissa, <i>Eastern Anthr.</i> Vol. XVI, No. 2, pp. 133-137.  |

# MAN-CHU-SHIH-LI

## AN ESSAY ON POLITY AND RELIGION

### IN INNER ASIA

NIRMAL CHANDRA SINHA

( Received on 11 July 1966 )

#### I

**I** was a Catholic in France, a Protestant in Germany, a Papist in Rome and a Muhammadan in Egypt.' When Napoleon summed up his foreign policy in these cryptic words he was not aware of a prototype in the Manchu emperor ruling over China, Tibet, Mongolia and Turkestan besides his homeland of Manchuria.

An emperor of China could not but be a Confucian (and a Taoist) and must of necessity lead a Confucian government. Otherwise the Son of Heaven would be a barbarian *par excellence*. Besides the Son of Heaven, whether Han or not, must 'use the barbarians to control the barbarians' (*i i chih i*). The Manchu—a non-Han, that is, barbarian—answered the command of tradition to the satisfaction both of his native barbarian interest and his Confucian kingdom.

---

The author is Director of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, Sikkim.

All dates are in Christian era.

Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese and Mongol words are transcribed without diacritical marks. Spyān-ras-gzigs is written as Chen-re-zi in the second half of the essay.

Being in the nature of an essay footnotes are dispensed with. This essay anticipates a considerable portion of facts and arguments of my projected study of Lamaist polity. All Tibetan sources will be acknowledged appropriately in this study. For Chinese sources I acknowledge my indebtedness to Prabodh BAGCHI, Joseph EDKINS, Charles ELIOTT, Herbert GILES, Ferdinand LESSING, Owen LATTIMORE, Franz MICHAEL, Arthur WRIGHT and E. ZURCHER. For Mongol sources my guide is Cyben ZAMCARANO. I am however responsible for all inferences. A reader who seeks complete data in support of the non-conformist views presented here will have to be patient till the projected study on Lamaist polity is out.

## II

For about one thousand years an exotic religion, Buddhism, had prevailed with varying fortunes as a rival to the native religions of China. Eventually it survived as a religion of a small minority and even as such was metamorphosed into, what is called in academic circles, Chinese Buddhism.

Denial of soul, equality for all (men as well as women) and immunities for the monks as in Buddhism encountered ancestor worship, privileges of the literati and refuge in the Son of Heaven as in Chinese tradition. Thus even when Buddhism prospered and counted a large number of devotees it did not wipe out old sentiments or old sacrifices. This is true of Buddhism's most prosperous days of the great Tang dynasty (618-907).

In 624 Fu-yi, the scholar who wielded much influence on the Court, submitted a memorial to the Emperor. The publicity of the Buddhist texts, in Fu-yi's words, 'began to adversely affect the faith of the Princes and filial piety began to degenerate. The people began to shave their heads and refused to bow their heads to the Princes and their ancestors'. The memorial was responsible for a period of persecution of Buddhism. The revocation of the persecution was not a little due to Chinese interest in Khotan-Turfan where Buddhism was a popular creed and from where, in the words of Fu-yi, 'Buddhism infiltrated into China under a strange and barbarous form'.

In 819 Emperor Hsien-tsung arranged for the adoration of some relics of the Buddha. This drew forth a protest from the scholar Han-yu who also held a high office in the State. This memorial remains a landmark in China's history as it is a masterpiece in China's literature. Han-yu's objection to the adoration of 'the bone of a man long since dead and decomposed' was prefaced with these words: 'For Buddha was a barbarian. His language was not the language of China. His clothes were of an alien cut. He did not utter the maxims of our ancient rulers nor conform to the customs which they have



handed down. He did not appreciate the bond between prince and minister, the tie between father and son.' The Emperor was furious and wished to execute the memorialist. But Han-yu's friends were many and persuaded the Emperor to award a token punishment. It was the honourable banishment as governor of a distant town.

By the end of the twelfth century Buddhism as a distinct religion in China was definitely on the decline. Much of its ethics was absorbed into or identified with Confucian code and the Buddha with his Arhats were enrolled in the Taoist pantheon. Symbolic of these developments was the early metamorphosis of the Naga motif. Naga, the custodian and protector of the Secret Teachings/Transcendental Wisdom, is an animal with a man's head and a serpent's body. In the Tang period the symbol of the Ancestor's Spirit, namely, the dragon was no longer a rival of the Naga to symbolize Mahayana but the standard motif. Later from Siberia to the Indian Ocean the dragon was the universal symbol of Mahayana.

The decline of Buddhism in China was hastened by Chu-hsi (1130-1200), a Confucian scholar who had absorbed much of Buddhist metaphysics and mysticism and then launched his attack on the 'barbarian religion'. Under this attack Buddhism lost the Court patronage and having never been a State religion quietly went out.

When Buddhism returned to the Court it was under the auspices of barbarian kings and barbarian priests : the Mongol Khans from Altai-Karakorum and the Lamas from Sakya (Tibet). Symbolically enough the Court assembled in a new metropolis, Khanbalyk (Kambalu). In Chinese tradition Khanbalyk came to be known as Peking as the Mongol dynasty got the 'civilized' nomenclature of Yuan. The Yuans, that is, Kubilai and his successors, ruled China from 1270 to 1368. They no doubt patronized Buddhism. This Buddhism was however not Chinese Buddhism but Lamaism whose followers were the reces beyond the Great Wall. The last years of the last Yuan witnessed an agitation in favour of Confucianism.

and against the ascendancy of the Lamas in Peking. The replacement of the Yuans by a native dynasty (Mings) is significantly celebrated in Chinese annals as the Restoration, though this Restoration does not deter the modern Chinese historians to claim the Mongol conquests all over Asia as Chinese achievements. The Ming Emperors (1368-1644) in their relations with Buddhism were guided by considerations about the races beyond the Wall. Thus they patronized Buddhism while promulgating special decrees to control the monks and priests. The third Ming even invited the founder of the Yellow Sect, Tsong-kha-pa (d.1417), to visit the court and received Tsong-kha-pa's representative with honour and respect. The Mings had early discerned that the Yellow Sect Lamas were bidding for temporal power and would be quite worldly wise to be ever strong with the stronger side. But while the Yellow Sect was busy in converting the Mongol tribes, the Mings were engaged in meeting internal disorders and Manchu inroads. The Manchus conquered China in 1644 and shortly afterwards the Manchu Emperor was recognized as the incarnation of Man-chu-shih-li (Chinese for Manjusri) by the head of the Yellow Sect who was the incarnation of Avalokitesvara.

### III

Manjusri represents Prajna (Tib. shes-rab) or Wisdom while Avalokitesvara represents Karuna (Tib. snying-rje) or Compassion and possession of both Wisdom and Compassion is essential for a Bodhisattva (Tib. Byang-chub-sems-dpah). While in the early Mahayana Wisdom has precedence over Compassion, in the later Mahayana this status is reversed. Manjusri has to yield his ascendancy to Avalokitesvara as Altruism in the shape of Bodhisattva displaces Self-Enlightenment in the shape of Pratyekabuddha (Tib. Rang-sangs-rgyas). This change of status between Manjusri and Avalokitesvara can be best described in the following words of HAR DAYAL (*The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, London, 1932).

'The early Mahayana recognises an oligarchy of bodhisattvas, and eight are mentioned as a group of equal rank. Perhaps Manjusri is regarded as *primus inter pares*. In the later Mahayana, the oligarchy is changed into an absolute monarchy. Avalokitesvara is first and the rest nowhere. He absorbs all the virtues, powers, functions and prerogatives of the other bodhisattvas, because he is the Lord of Mercy. He occupies the supreme position in the Universe and reigns without a rival.'

Thus when the Bodhisattva doctrine migrated from India to the Trans-Himalayas it did so under the auspices, so to say, of the Lord Paramount, that is, Avalokitesvara. King Srong-btsan-sgam-po (605-650) who made Buddhism the State religion in Tibet was recognized to be an incarnation of Avalokitesvara (Tib. Spyan-ras-gzigs), while his minister Thomi Sambhota was found to be an incarnation of Manjusri (Tib. Hjam-dpal). This secular ranking of the two Bodhisattvas followed the Mahayana pantheon as it had evolved in India and determined the future trend of politics in Lamaist countries.

For eight hundred years after Srong-btsan-sgam-po no king or priest appears to have attained the position of Avalokitesvara (Tib. Spyan-ras-gzigs). Some of the kings called Chos-rgyal (Tib. for Dharmaraja) were occasionally designated Avalokitesvara as were some priests. Such designation however did not circulate beyond the palace or monastery concerned. In any case no lineage of Avalokitesvara functioned anywhere. The ruler-priests of Kargyu (Karma) and Sakya Sects traced descent from Vajradhara (Tib. Rdo-rje-hchang) and Manjusri (Tib. Hjam-dpal) but none dared to designate himself as Avalokitesvara. The line of Yellow Sect incarnations, soon to be known as the Dalai Lamas, made the bid for the lineage of Avalokitesvara and succeeded in obtaining recognition to such title from all Sects. The incarnation of Spyan-ras-gzigs (pronounced Chen-re-zi) became the temporal authority over all Sects besides being the spiritual authority over his own Gelugpa (Yellow Sect). The scattered remnants of the old Tibetan monarchy and the small principalities as well as the

Karma and Sakya priest-kings rendered the Dalai Lamas a positive allegiance, the precise nature of which can hardly be described in the language of Roman law or modern phraseology. (This problem is elaborated in the present writer's article entitled 'Asian Law and Usage in European Language' in *Man in India*, Jan.-March, 1966).

The Gelugpas (Yellow Sect) significantly designated their government as Dgah-ldan-pho-brang (Government of Heaven) which soon became a sovereign authority in its own right. No secular body was to share this sovereignty with the Dga-ldan-pas (Heavenly Beings). The Lama was now the final authority in society and government.

The Lama was already 'the one with none above'. As the ancient adage ran 'Previous to the Lama even the name of the Buddha did not exist' (*bla-ma med-pahi gong-rol-na sangs-rgyas-bya-pai ming-yang med*). Characteristically in Tibet 'Refuge in Three Gems' was not sufficient and the recitation was amended to 'I take refuge in the Lama: I take refuge in the Buddha: I take refuge in the Dharma: I take refuge in the Sangha.' The Lama, corresponding to Guru in Sanskrit, is the first refuge as the Lama is the indispensable medium. Thus the Dalai Lama, as the incarnation of Avalokitesvara (Tib. *Spyan-ras-gzigs* = *Chen-re-zi*), became the Real Refuge or Precious Protector (Tib. *Skyabs-mgon-sbug/Skyab-mgon-rin-po-che*) for all irrespective of Sects. *Chen-re-zi* was *Chos-rgyal-chen-po* (Mahadharmaraja) for all Nang-pas (Tib. for Bauddha) irrespective of their sectarian and territorial loyalties.

#### IV

An alliance between *Chen-re-zi* and *Man-chu-shih-li* was in the logic of history.

The Yellow Sect in its zeal for reforming the Sangha found it necessary to capture political power all over Tibet and resort to sanction in temporal sense. The Mongol devotees provided such sanction but the floating Mongol tribes could

not compare in stability or dignity with the Son of Heaven. On the decline of Mongol interest in Tibet (1640's) the Great Fifth (Dalai Lama V, 1617-82) looked for alignment with China. It so happened that the then Son of Heaven was a barbarian (Manchu). The Manchu Emperor, called Ching in China, was nothing short of a Janus. His newly conquered empire of China demanded all energies in winning over and pacifying the natives. On the other hand the home-land of Manchuria was to be fully secured against the Mongols, particularly when the Mongols did not differ so much from the Manchus as the Manchus from the Chinese. In fact acquisition of all Mongolia was not less precious than the retention of the hold on China. A peaceful means of this acquisition was alliance with the Dalai Lama whom the scattered Mongol tribes rendered allegiance.

Dalai Lama V visited Peking in 1652-3 in response to repeated invitations from Emperor Shun-chih. The Manchu, notwithstanding the contrary advice of his Chinese counsellors, treated the Lama as an independent sovereign. In return the Lama undertook to exert his influence with the Mongols to preserve peace and to cease raids on Manchuria or China. Under the doctrines of non-violence and peace the Mongols became less warlike while the growth of monastic communities tempered their native mobility. The Yellow Sect on the other hand became absolute in Tibet under the Manchu umbrella.

The Manchu investment earned its dividends in 1688. For some years previous to this the Mongol princes were much exercised over choice of alignment with the Russian Tsar or the Manchu Son of Heaven. In 1688 the princes handed over the decision to the Hutukhtu of Urga, the highest Mongol incarnation and second to the Dalai Lama in the entire Yellow Sect. The Hutukhtu decided in favour of the Manchu alignment. In 1691 Emperor Kang-hsi came to Dolon Nor to receive the oath of allegiance from the body of 24 princes. The Mongol annals, however, trace the genesis of this allegiance to a document of 1636 by which the Mongol tribes had recognized the Manchu overlordship 'as long as Sun, Moon and Manchu flourish'.

At the same time the Manchu became Man-chu-shih-li. In the beginning, long before their conquest of China, their dynastic nomenclature (Manchu) was adapted from Manju, a word widely prevalent among the Mongols. It had then no religious context for the Manchu. Manjusri was however a popular deity for the Mongols from the time of Kubilai Khan and the Sakya Lamas. Therefore when the Manchu Emperor was to be enrolled as an incarnation he could with profit be the incarnation of Manjusri. It gave the Emperor much advantage *vis-à-vis* the Mongols. Chen-re-zi being the Lord Paramount of the pantheon Dalai Lama's status continued undiminished. That accounts for Dalai Lama V being received as a sovereign by the Manchu Emperor.

Later the Manchu concern and respect for the Lamas and intimacy with the Jesuits led to a Confucian agitation against Buddhism and Christianity. The Lamas were necessary links with Mongolia and Tibet while the Jesuit knowledge of mathematics, astronomy and geography was no less indispensable for imperial statecraft. Kang-hsi (1662-1723) gave to the Confucian literati all that imperial favour could give and made a show of chastising heterodoxy. In his famous edict of 1705 Kang-hsi appealed for harmony between Buddhism and Confucianism thus: 'We since our boyhood have been earnest students of Confucian lore and have had no time to become minutely acquainted with the sacred books of Buddhism, but we are satisfied that Virtue is the one word which indicates what is essential in both systems. Let us pray to the compassionate Kuan-yin that she may of her grace send down upon our people the spiritual rain and sweet dew of the good Law: that she may grant them bounteous harvests, seasonable winds and the blessings of peace, harmony and long life and finally that she may lead them to the salvation which she offers to all beings in the Universe.' (Kuan-yin is the Chinese word for Avalokitesvara whose worship in female form was popular in China and Japan.)

While Kang-hsi asked for the blessings of peace and harmony, his son Yang-chen (1723-36) built the famous Lamaist cathedral

in Peking and named it The Palace of Harmony (Yung-ho-kung). The Manchu quest for 'harmony' is expounded in the Dissertation on Lamaism composed by Kang-hsi's grandson Chien-lung in 1792; it is engraved on a marble stele in Yung-ho-kung.

Chien-lung (1736-96)—who consolidated the Manchu overlordship in Tibet and Mongolia, who showed how long was the Manchu arm by chastising the Gurkhas in Tibet and who received 'the Red Barbarian bearing tribute' (British Ambassador Lord Macartney, 1793)—had to answer to his Confucian ministers and counsellors for his own 'barbarian bias' towards the Lamas. In his Dissertation on Lamaism Chien-lung admitted that 'Lama means without superior' but made a painstaking protest that he or his own ancestors did not 'worship the Lamas' as did the Yuan (Mongol) dynasty.

'As the Yellow Church inside and outside (of China proper) is under the supreme rule of these two men (Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama), all the Mongol tribes bear allegiance to them. By patronizing the Yellow Church we maintain peace among the Mongols. This being an important task we cannot but protect this (religion). (In doing this) we do not show any bias, nor do we wish to adulate the Tibetan priests as (was done by the) Yuan dynasty.'

The Dissertation on Lamaism was in fact the testament of Chien-lung for his son and successors as it was a self-justification addressed to the Confucian literati. Chien-lung in old age was a much tired and much troubled ruler. In 1796 he had completed sixty years of reign and refused to exceed the long tenure of his grandfather Kang-hsi. He abdicated to observe filial piety and lived in retirement for three more years. Known as the glorious epilogue to the most glorious reign Chien-lung's abdication was a premonition for the lineage of Man-chu-shih-li.

Chien-lung in his Dissertation claimed two specific achievements in Tibet. He had laid down a certain procedure for installation of the two Grand Lamas; in this, drawing lot

from a golden urn was the central ritual. Whether this was in keeping with the current Tibetan sentiment or not, this was a mark of Manchu overlordship as the Manchu representative was to draw the lot along with a Lama. Secondly when the Gurkhas invaded Tibet with the support of the Red Sect (1790), the Manchu forces came to the rescue of the Yellow Sect; the Gurkhas were 'chastised and reduced to abject submission'. These claims are true and stand as testimony to the Manchu overlordship at the end of the eighteenth century.

Nineteenth century witnessed an irrevocable reversal of the picture. Suffering from corruption and inefficiency in his own government the Manchu Emperor could no longer take any active interest in politics or religion of Tibet or Mongolia. When in 1855 the Gurkhas invaded Tibet, Tibet had to fend for itself. In 1903-4 Britain invaded Tibet with China not in the picture; the Dalai Lama sought refuge in Mongolia. On both occasions Tibet made terms with the aggressor and concluded treaties without China's participation.

Nineteenth century found four successive Dalai Lamas (IX-XII) die in their minority; the unseen hand of destiny remains obscure. The next (Dalai Lama XIII) was chosen (1876) without the procedure of lot from the Golden Urn and reached the age of 57 when he passed away in 1933. The Golden Urn was discredited and defunct even before the Manchu was expelled from Peking (1911-12). The present incarnation of Chen-re-zi (Dalai Lama XIV b. 1935) was identified to the full satisfaction of the Nang-pa (Tib. for Bauddha) and no 'Chinese rites' entered into the choice.

A Lama is not to bow to a secular authority and the Manchu was a secular authority. Even as an incarnation of Man-chu-shih-li he could not expect salutation from the Dalai Lama, an incarnation of Chen-re-zi. The Manchu could not become the head of the Church as no Dalai Lama designated him Chos-rgyal (Dharmaraja). In 1908 when Dalai Lama XIII called on the Manchu at Peking he had to touch the ground with the right knee, it is said on the insistence of the Dowager Empress. The Emperor (Kuang-hsu) as well as the Dowager died five



weeks later and the Expulsion of the Manchu came after another three years. The sacrilege brought forth the right retribution, as the Tibetans and Mongols felt. The inexorable Law of Karma, that is how Dalai Lama XIII explained the Expulsion.

## V

With the Expulsion of the Manchu Tibet and Mongolia broke away from China. In November 1911 the princes of Mongolia declared their independence and proclaimed the Hutukhtu of Urga as the Ruler of Mongolia; immediately after the proclamation of the Republic in China (January 1912) the Mongol tribes affirmed allegiance to Urga. Dalai Lama XIII designated himself as the Pontiff of Buddhism and Ruler of Tibet by Command of the Buddha (Summer 1912).

The Chinese Republic made fruitless efforts to succeed to the rights of the Manchu Emperor. The Patron-Priest relations, like Manjusri-Avalokitesvara relations, do not devolve under the rules of State succession. President Yuan-shih-kai resorted to an anachronistic ruse. He got the deposed Emperor (Pu-yi b. 1906) issue an edict in November 1912 that there should be a union of Five Races (Chinese, Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans and Muhammadans). Tibet and Mongolia retorted by conclusion of a treaty in January 1913 as between two independent countries.

The vicissitudes of the quondam Man-chu-shih-li (Emperor Pu-yi), Emperor of Manchu-kuo in 1934-45 and now a State-archivist in the People's Republic of China, provide material for a fascinating though pitiful story in the masterly pen of a Sinologist (MCALFEAVY: *A Dream of Tartary*, London, 1963). The eventful life of the quondam Man-chu-shih-li is not over yet. If as a child of six Pu-yi could oblige the Republic with an edict about Five Races, in his sixties he can oblige the People's Republic with an edict about Two Races (Tibetans and Mongols). When Chen-re-zi has failed to conform Man-chu-shih-li may not.

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

### SARAT CHANDRA ROY

**S**ARAT Chandra Roy [born 4th November, 1871 ; died 30th April, 1942] was one of the pioneers of anthropological studies in India. He was the first to deliver a course of lectures on anthropology in any Indian University<sup>1</sup> (Patna 1920), and also one of the first to publish a quarterly journal, namely *Man in India*, devoted exclusively to anthropological and related archaeological studies in India (1921). Sarat Chandra Roy was also connected with the Bihar and Orissa Research Society ever since its inception in Patna. The *Journal* of that Society was enriched by a large number of articles from his pen, while its museum owes him a heavy debt for the gifts of the major part of his own ethnographic and archaeological collection.

Roy's first book on the *Mundas and their Country* was published in 1912 ; this being followed by his monographs on *The Oraons of Chotanagpur* (1915), *The Birhors* (1925), *Oraon Religion and Customs* (1928), *The Hill Bhuiyas of Orissa* (1935) and *The Kharias* (1937).

Besides these, he wrote copiously on a variety of topics like caste, Hindu religious ideas, migration of different racial groups and cultures in India, and so on. But it is not the volume alone of his writings which is impressive, although that in itself would have done credit to any scholar of reputation. Far above that was the nature of his encyclopaedic scholarship, and the depth which he reached in his analytical appraisal of the religion and philosophy of either the tribal communities whom he described or of the Hindu social system by which they were, either consciously or unconsciously, affected.

---

1. S. C. Roy, *Principles and Methods of Physical Anthropology*, Patna, 1921. This note is reprinted from *Studies in Indian Anthropology* by Sarat Chandra Roy, published by Indian Studies, Past and Present, Calcutta, 1966. The obituary notice of Sarat Chandra Roy was published in *Man in India*, Vol. 22, December 1942.

Roy was a deeply religious man in the sense that he looked upon the highest values of a civilization as its central substance, and he also tried to appreciate the worth of a civilization, whether tribal or advanced, by trying to identify himself in spirit with that central core of ideas. This gave him an advantage which is often denied to scientists who are concerned more with the formal, tangible aspects of human culture. But this idealistic approach had also its own disadvantages.

Even when it gave a meaning to some of the happenings in the history of communities, it sometimes blocked the way to an appreciation of other forces which may also regulate human life to an appreciable extent. In Indian anthropology Roy was a pioneer; and in his days, anthropology as a science had had not reached the degree of precision or objectivity which it has attained in later times. But that is a limitation under which a pioneer has always to work

It is extremely reassuring, however, to note that Roy was never orthodox in his approach. In some of his studies of Oraon revivalist movements, he clearly indicated that although the revolt of the Oraon revivalists or reformers took a predominantly religious or cultural form, yet the inspiration arose from their reaction to distressing economic circumstances which pressed upon them from all around. Indeed, it was this sympathy and understanding of the sorrows of tribal communities which had turned him from the profession of Law to that of an anthropologist. For he saw clearly that without a deep insight into the workings of a people's culture and thought-system we were more likely to do them harm than good.

In the last years of his life, Roy realized one thing more. In his earlier studies during the first quarter of the twentieth century, he had undoubtedly broken new ground by enlisting the services of History in an appreciation of a people's culture—a point of view to which the followers of the Functional School of anthropology turned long afterwards. But Roy realized that he had perhaps done something which was not quite justified. In describing the culture of a tribe like the Oraon, for instance, he had on the whole under-rated (though

not overlooked) territorial or regional differentiations, and tried to present a composite picture of 'Oraon culture', which did not actually apply to any particular section of the tribe which lived as 'a community', and was separately identifiable either in space or in time.

To this extent, he paid a homage to the Functional School by his confession to the present writer a few months before he passed away that if he were given the chance of living his life over again, he would disregard all the ethnographic accounts which he had written in the past. Instead, he would bury himself in a single village or a small region, and study in microscopic detail how the life of the community was built up as well as its culture. This desire to engage in a new adventure of intensive, microscopic study was proof of his superb intellectual resilience.

But one can hardly ignore the possibility of a microscopic study also leading one astray. A cytologist undoubtedly succeeds in adding copiously to our knowledge; but cytology cannot wholly disregard the findings of anatomy or morphology. Just as Roy may have overstepped in his earlier writings in the direction of what is popularly known as idealism, so the Functionalist can also bring about his own undoing by an excessive concern for what happens within the 'cell' itself. Roy was saved from idolatry by the encyclopaedic sweep of his intellect, and was able to appreciate both points of view even when he was destined no longer to put his new appreciation of modern anthropology into practice. But the story of his life should help us in avoiding idolatry at the other end, when we are likely to mislead ourselves by the belief that a study of human society's cell-structure will offer us all the magical key necessary for an understanding of human civilization.

Roy's life and work thus holds a great lesson for us even to-day. And it is, therefore, that I welcome the present endeavour of the devoted band of scholars responsible for the publication of *Indian Studies: Past & Present*. They have republished a few of Sarat Chandra Roy's essays and addresses delivered on different occasions. These cover a wide range

of subjects which are both of theoretical and practical interest. Scholars who read these essays will find many new vistas opening up before them if they do so with an openness and reverence which they eminently deserve. One need not agree with every view expressed, for that is something which Roy himself would never have desired. As he changed, he would expect others to change also. And it is in this intellectual stimulation, when we keep an open mind, that we can pay the best homage to one who acted as a pioneer and a doyen in the field of Indian anthropology.

*Calcutta*

Nirmal Kumar Bose

23 July 1966

### ATTEMPTS OF A POTTER

During my recent stay in West Germany I took the opportunity of studying the technique of pottery-making at Herr Winter's workshop in Kastel Mainz.<sup>1</sup>

The following are the details of an experiment made on a bowl which is a modern copy of a Greek original.

After kneading and preparing the clay fully, a bowl was turned on wheel. It was then left for drying. But as the dried surface carried some salt over it, the latter had to be removed by making the surface a little wet with sponge. Since the shine and finish of the pottery are dependent on different types of clay-solutions which react in different ways when fired, the potter is supposed to know the qualities of these slips at different temperatures of the kiln. As such, the dried bowl was once again rotated on the wheel and treated with an intentional red slip which is brownish in colour.

Then a black slip<sup>2</sup> was applied to the foot-ring and rim with a brush, while the wheel was in motion. The hair of the

---

1. Herr Winters is experimenting primarily on Greek pottery and delivers lectures at the Heidelberg University on the technique of ancient pottery.

2. Greenish and grey-clay solutions become black in a temperature which is sufficient to make the original bowl red. Even the preparation of this slip is a strenuous task. The clay has to be kept in a flask with a little bit of a soda (alkali) added to it, so that the finer clay comes up and it is this that is used for slip.

brush was cut obliquely so that the slip dripped down slowly and uniformly. Intentional red slip was then added on the interior as well in a similar way.

As the slip dried it was observed that the rational qualities of the clay found a shining surface even before firing.

The bowl thus became ready for firing in the kiln. At first the temperature was kept only up to 200° C. for slow warming, so that the mineral water dried up. After half an hour of slow warming, the temperature was raised to 800° C. At this temperature the water disappeared fully. The temperature was then raised up to 840° C, only for five minutes, during which both sides of the vessel became red. Immediately after this the reduction process was taken recourse to. This was done by inserting a few pieces of dry wood in the kiln. The reduction became effective within another five minutes and the whole pot turned black. In the last stage of firing, the pot passed through re-oxidization (800° C) when the black-slipped portion remained black and the remaining part regained a clean, beautiful red appearance because air was allowed to pass in and the smoke to pass out. As soon as the smoke was out, the temperature was raised to 860°-880° C., after which the kiln was made to cool down. Thus the desired effects were achieved. It may also be added here that the moment the temperature is raised to 900° C, the sherd tends to become weak and lose its shine ; so great care has to be taken in maintaining the right temperature in the kiln.

It is high time that we in India also started experimenting on these lines. The reaction of fire on different types of clay-solutions applied on surface and also on the clay itself could be seen by collecting clays from different regions and working on them in the laboratories. When the potters in ancient times could produce such a fine pottery as the Northern Black Polished Ware without any scientific apparatus, cannot we find out at least the process involved in its making ?

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Land System and Feudalism in Ancient India.** *Edited by D. C. Sircar.* 1966. Pp. 140. *University of Calcutta.* Rs. 7.50.

A seminar was organized in 1964 at the U. G. C. Centre of Advanced Study at the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture in the University of Calcutta. Prof. R. S. Sharma was in the chair, and ten papers were altogether presented on two days. The topics, as indicated in the title of the proceedings, were land system and feudalism in ancient India. Participants came from the host University as well as from Banaras, Burdwan, Jadavpur, Gauhati, Lucknow, etc.

A large amount of useful ground was covered, definitions were examined and evidences assessed for ascertaining how far the term *feudalism*, for instance, could be applied to conditions prevalent in the past in India. It is obvious that sharp differences were brought out in opinions ; and it is all for the better that this was so.

It appears to the reviewer, however, that the term *feudalism* was often used by different scholars to convey not quite the same meaning. Consequently, some drew a parallel from the evolution of feudalism in mediaeval Europe and tried to apply it to an interpretation of what had happened in India, while others stoutly denied the validity of such a procedure. Dr. D. C. Sircar was undoubtedly convincing in his suggestion that the content of landlordship in ancient India was so clearly different from that of Europe that the use of the term was not justified.

The seminar was stimulating in its effect ; and at least clearly demonstrated the need of more precision and a wider dependence on historical proof than was in evidence in some of the papers.

Nirmal Kumar Bose

**The Audumbaras.** *By Kalyan Kumar Dasgupta.* 1965. Pp. 42+6 plates. *Calcutta Sanskrit College Research Series.* Sanskrit College, Calcutta.

The Audumbaras formed one of the tribes of the Punjab who succeeded, more or less, in maintaining their independent existence

during the troublous times from the fall of the Maurya empire to the formation of the next one under the Guptas. The tradition of republics or democracies of small dimension in this part of the country goes back to the 8th cent. B.C., and forms a most interesting chapter in the political history of ancient India. Many of these were evidently shattered or deeply injured by Alexander's invasion and the subsequent rise of centralized Mauryan authority. Yet some lingered on in a fairly healthy condition.

Dr. Kalyan Kumar Dasgupta has done an excellent work by piecing together all available information on the Audumbaras. He has used new materials and successfully tried to offer new explanations. We do hope he will continue his researches with the same painstaking care on other tribes like the Kunindas, Malavas and Yaudheyas.

The plates have been excellently reproduced, and the reviewer finds at least some of them, numbers 1, 2, 3 in plate I and 5 and 6 in plate II, of great interest. They represent structures which are apparently like the Dravidian *Vimānas* (temples) of later times. Both sets belong to near the beginnings of the Christian era. These, like some similar representations of *Vihāras* in Udayagiri (Orissa) and in some Buddhist stupas add substantially to our knowledge about ancient Indian buildings.

Nirmal Kumar Bose

**La Vegetation de l' Inde : Ecologie et Flore.** *par L. Legris.*  
*Pondicherry : Institut français, 1963. Pp. 596.*

As the author puts it in the Introduction : 'The purpose of this volume is the study of the ecology and of the vegetation of India, the description and classification of the diverse types of vegetation in function of the general conditions of their environment.' This the author has accomplished with surprising thoroughness within the limits he set himself. An enormous sum of painstaking work and careful investigation and observation must have gone into this vast study. Mr. Legris, as cartographer, was led to a minute study of, not only the vegetation of India, but also of its ecology, of all the factors that condition it, and to draw up a detailed tableau of the Indian flora.



In Part I are outlined the geography, geology and climate of India with various bioclimatic syntheses and tentative conclusions. Then follows, in Part II, a detailed study of the different types and groups of vegetation in relation to various ecological conditions and man's intervention in nature's course. A provisional classification concludes this section. Part III gives a description of the flora of this continent and of its historical evolution. Lastly, Part IV presents a summary and the conclusion of this elaborate study, with copious bibliographical and analytical tables and an alphabetical list of the various species of plants mentioned in the volume. The author ends by expressing the hope that his attempt at a synthesis may spur on others to further study which may throw light on unsolved problems his study has raised.

I note that the plateau of Chota Nagpur hardly appears in this extensive survey. It is true that this region is only a part of a large belt that receives sufficient attention in the book. Moreover, from the bibliography it is clear that the flora of Chota Nagpur has not been studied yet to any great extent.

F. E.

**Abhandlungen und Berichte des Staatlichen Museums für Völkerkunde Dresden.** *Berlin : Akademie-Verlag—1965. Band 24. Pp. 182.*

This number 24 of the Proceedings and Notices of the Ethnological State Museum of Dresden contains short articles on Eskimo implements, on Hunting and Music among the Nambicwara Indians (Brazil), on some points of the Social Organization of the Bush Negroes of Dutch Guiana, on the Decay of the Clan Community in Ruanda, on Nigerian (Benin) Iconography, on Methods of Obtaining Colours in SE. New Guinea, and on the Japanese Coloured Wood-Prints. Some of the articles are suitably illustrated.

From the same State Museum of Dresden we have received a little illustrated catalogue of some exhibits of the Museum. *Waffen ferner Völker* (P. 64) contains 32 photographs with brief descriptions of some weapons in use among primitive populations in various parts of the world. Characteristically many of these weapons are quite ornamental.

F. E.

**Tools : Creator of Civilization : The Development of Man.** *As Revealed by the Discoveries of Dr. Raymond A. Dart. Pp. 15+60 and numerous illustrations.*

The present booklet consists of two parts : the first part is the presentation address by L. Wilkie in honour of Dr. Raymond A. Dart, a renowned physical anthropologist of Johannesburg. The second part of the booklet is the official brochure entitled 'To tell the truth to all the world' issued by the American Economic Foundation on the occasion of New York World's Fair, 1964-65.

The central idea of the booklet is that tools, 'the instruments of culture', are responsible for man's progress and material welfare, thus justifying the title, 'Tools : Creator of Civilization' ;

A. R. N. Srivastava

**Survey of the Limba People of Northern Sierre Leone.** *By R. H. Finnegan. 1965. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London. 25 sh.*

This is a very informative book of 150 pages with maps about the little-known Limba people who live in the northern part of Sierre Leone. The method followed is careful and ramified and the coverage within a brief scale is adequate. The Limba people have their own problems and are not isolated from the general trends and strains of modern life. The background is well presented for an appreciation of their present condition. The economy and the religion of the Limba have points in common with some of our tribal communities and will bear a careful study. There should have been an index. The writer should be congratulated for her contribution.

P. C. Roy Chowdhury

**The Beginnings of Indian Philosophy.** *By Franklin Edgerton. Pp. 362. George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 45 sh.*

Prof. Edgerton has presented a careful and authoritative translation of selections from the *Rig Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, *Upanishads* and the *Mahabharata*. The book has been accepted in the Indian Translation Series of the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works, jointly sponsored by the UNESCO and the Govt. of India,

The book is a valuable contribution which will help in the appreciation of the beginning and early development of Hindu philosophy.

P. C. Roy Chowdhury

**Language History** (from *Language*), By Leonard Bloomfield. 1965. Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., New York. Price not mentioned.

This is a reprint of a few chapters from Bloomfield's *Language*. The book will be of great value and does not lose its importance in any way by being torn out of the original.

P. C. Roy Chowdhury

**The Fern and the Tiki.** By David P. Ausubel. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, London ; price not mentioned.

In this book, David Ausubel, a Visiting American Professor, has presented a searching and constructive analysis of the New Zealander of to-day, and the Welfare State he has built around himself. He has X-rayed the present New Zealander's ambitions, his attitude and his reaction to the 'imposition' of authority, juvenile delinquency, race relations, etc. With the backdrop of the counterpart trends in the States, Professor Ausubel is not hypercritical for the sake of criticism, and he is fully cognizant of the new reaction of the New Zealanders to American attitudes. He tries to come to positive conclusions from his analysis and often gives helpful suggestions. From his analysis and conclusions one become well acquainted with the introverted and reserved nature of the present-day New Zealander.

The chapter on Race Relations and the author's overall impression of Maori-Pakeha relations raises quite a few controversial issues, but presents us with a very clear picture. This is an illuminating sociological study and bears the imprint of hard labour, sympathetic but critical attitude and penetrating insight.

P. C. Roy Chowdhury

**Indian Political Associations and Reform of Legislature (1818-1917).** By B. B. Mazumdar. Pp. 478 with Bibliography and Index. Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyaya, Calcutta. Rs. 20.

This is a great contribution to the political literature of India. Dr. Mazumdar has given a careful, objective study by tracing the

origin and development of public life in different parts of India during the period of 1818-1917. He has spared no pains in delving deep into the documents in archives, newspapers, memoranda, diaries and many unpublished tracts, besides scanning the published literature. The contribution of the various political associations of different shades of opinion in the different provinces were being put in shade by the steam-roller of Congress politics and there was a lurking danger that a generation would grow up with the idea that prior to the advent of the age of Gandhi not much had been done to develop political consciousness by various political and socio-political associations. True, there have been publications in the past but the books are not easily available. The contribution of some of the newspapers and periodicals was almost being forgotten. Dr. B. B. Mazumdar's book is a landmark as it has the stamp of deep scholarly study in which a critical synthesis has been presented.

While tracing the origin and development of the Indian National Congress, Dr. Mazumdar would have done well in going through Bishen Narain Dar's two volumes of *India in England*. It gives an authoritative account of the agency set up at Craven Row to further the cause of the Congress in England and gives copious extracts from British papers during 1885-1887 regarding the Congress movement in India. Dr. Mazumdar has also forgotten the lesser known political associations in Assam, Orissa and other regions. They were vital to the advancement of particular regions and have great regional importance. For example, the Utkal Union Conference for decades within the period of the coverage of this book worked hard for the unification of the Oriya-speaking tracts distributed under four provinces into one administrative unit. There were also political associations for particular purposes like the Domiciled Bengalees' Association in provinces other than Bengal, and they did shape public life to some extent. The Moderates in North India, the Non-Brahmin movement in South India, the Justice Party, the various humanitarian movements in Madras, Bombay and Bengal particularly have not been as comprehensively presented as the earlier phase of the Congress movement. It is hoped that in the next edition Dr. Mazumdar will throw more light on these matters. Dr. Mazumdar's is an

outstanding piece of research and is a monumental work done at an appropriate time.

P. C. Roy Chowdhury

**Profiles of Tribal Culture in Bihar.** By Dr. Sachchidananda. Pp. 236. Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta-12.

Most of the articles compiled here were published in various journals between 1953 and 1964. These reflect different aspects of life of the tribes of Bihar amongst whom the author has worked besides supervising the field-work of his research staff.

The book is divided into the following parts: (1) The Tribal Village, (2) Social Organization, (3) Tribal Economy, (4) Political Consciousness and Social Control, (5) The Changing Scene, and Appendices. These broad sections are further sub-divided into several chapters numbering from two to seven. The book also contains an introduction, entitled 'Tribal Culture in Bihar', district-wise population chart of the Scheduled Tribes in Bihar, a preface, three plates of photographs and a map of Bihar showing the density of tribal population.

In the first chapter, which may be taken as an introduction, the author discusses the general characteristics of tribal villages, mainly of Chotanagpur, their economy, food, dress and ornaments, social organization, religion and festivals, social control and the changes to which these communities have been subject.

The section on the tribal village consists of three essays. In the first essay, the author discusses the manifestations of certain institutions which are generally absent in Hindu villages, namely, the dancing ground, bone-burials, the sacred grove and the youths' dormitory. Though these institutions have been discussed by means of examples from Chotanagpur, the author has, at places, tried to compare them with the tribes of other States as well, e. g. Naga of Nagaland and Muria of Madhya Pradesh. In the second essay, an understanding of the village as a social unit has been attempted through an analysis of the clan system and kinship. In the third essay, the author discusses a mixed village and concludes that the different castes and communities living in the village are knit together in one economic, social and cultural pattern based on mutual obligations, common customs and a common past.

The second section on social organization analyses class and caste in tribal Bihar, the role of the dance and music in tribal life, etc.

The third section deals with tribal economy, in which three types of economic units, namely, the family, the local group and the neighbourhood have been shown as the co-operative units. This is followed by a discussion of problems of tribal economy in Bihar.

Section four dealing with political consciousness and social control begins with the life-sketch of Birsa Munda. This is followed by a study of the second General Election and the participation of the tribals of Chotanagpur. The next chapter under this section discusses crime and punishment in a Munda village, in which the author comes to the conclusion that traditional village and *parha* panchayats play important roles in adjudicating disputes and mobilizing public opinion. This section is concluded with an essay on *Bitlaha*, an important institution of the Santal.

The fifth section deals with the impact of the Community Development programme, Hinduism, industrialization and role of emergent leaders in bringing about change in a tribal village. At the end of the book there is a bibliography on the tribes of Bihar, apart from a detailed index.

It is felt that the book would have been more useful had it contained more data about the tribes of Santal Parganas which is an equally important tribal belt (having 35 to 50 per cent tribal population) of this State.

B. N. Sahay

**Metaphysical Tradition and T. S. Eliot.** By S. K. Sen. Pp. 126. Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay. Rs. 10.

When Yeats wrote, 'I may dine at journey's end with Lander and with Donne', he expressed not merely his own feelings but of most of the poets who wrote between 1918 and 1950. The profound and pervasive influence of the metaphysicals on the modern poets, especially T. S. Eliot, has been discussed by many modern critics including Helen Gardner, Margaret Willy, Williamson and Matthiessen. In this sense, Dr. Sen breaks no new ground and he does not make any such pretentious claim for his book either. As he has said himself, the main object of his

enquiry is to examine the nature of metaphysical poetry and to investigate the nature and extent of Eliot's affinity with the metaphysicals. He has said nothing new about the nature of metaphysical poetry but he has succeeded in showing the close relationship between the metaphysicals and T. S. Eliot because he has made a dispassionate and objective analysis of Eliot's imagery in the light of that of the metaphysicals. On the whole, it is a useful book for serious students of English poetry and one only wishes some of the quotations from Eliot were less hackneyed and the author's critical comments slightly more original.

Arun Mustafi

**A Dictionary of the Social Sciences.** Edited by Julius Gould and William L. Kolb. Compiled under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Tavistock Publication, £6 6s. 1964. 11 New Fetter Lane, London, E. C. 4, pp. XVI-761.

We have recently received a very fascinating book, *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, which discusses more than a thousand terms and concepts used in the Social Sciences. Though this book does not provide an ordered body of knowledge or a detailed discussion of any special subject, yet it extensively covers several disciplines. The disciplines covered are Sociology, Social and Cultural Anthropology, Social Psychology, Political Science and Economics. After glancing through the entire book one gets an impression that there is slightly more emphasis on Political Science.

The terms and concepts not only provide definitions but, by and large, also give their historical background. In most cases, we find a brief description of the ideas of various earlier contributors belonging to the same or an allied discipline. The authors are eminent, top-ranking specialists of U. K. and U. S. A., and their number is about 270. American authors outnumber British. The absence of contributions from other countries of the world does not at all lessen the usefulness and richness of the book.

B. N. Sahay

**The Essence of Trade Unionism.** By Victor Feather. Pp. 127. National Academy, Delhi-6. Rs. 2.

The publishers have done a good service by giving us a cheap edition of this authoritative book which really gives the essence of

trade unionism in simple language and within a short compass. Trade unionism in India has found about two pages in the last chapter.

P. C. Roy Chowdhury

**Indian Voting Behaviour : Studies of the 1962 General Elections.** By Myron Weiner and Rajni Kothari. Pp. 219. Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta. 1965. Rs. 15.

Eight contributors including the Editor, have provided us with detailed statistical data on how various social and economic groups in the constituencies voted. The Editor's claim that the best studies included here were by individuals who had intimate contact with their respective constituencies. The editors advance none of the factors responsible for the selection of only eleven 'typical of their interests' constituencies. Even among these randomly sampled studies only four are devoted to rural areas. The generalizations on the basis of insufficient information does not appear to be convincing.

Some of the hypotheses arrived at are only tenable for a limited area. Among them one conclusion is asserted, namely, that 'the elections to the national legislature are less important in many ways than those to State legislature, since power in India remains fundamentally local' (p. 84). M. Weiner, in the last article, supports M. N. Sriniva's findings with regards to the political affiliations in Andhra on the basis of caste. Another significant point which emerges out of these studies is that the editors have done little justice to regional differences. Having ignored nine states out of sixteen and all the centrally administered territories, how can one claim to make a representative study of an all-India phenomenon?

One will agree that the scientific study of political dynamics in our country is yet in its infancy. In this context, the present attempt is highly commendable.

Awadhesh Coomar Sinha



## NOTICE

Subscribers whose dues are in arrears are requested kindly to remit their arrears and current subscription to the Manager, Man in India, 18 Church Road, Ranchi, Bihar, India, so that continuity of service may be maintained. Publications meant for exchange must be sent to the office of the journal at Ranchi.